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Woodbridge - TOMORROW

A COMMUNITY RENEWAL PROGRAM

PREPARED BY THE WOODBRIDGE REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY

CONSULTANTS VICTOR GRUEN ASSOCIATES
ARCHITECTURE · ENGINEERING · PLANNING

LARRY SMITH AND COMPANY
ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL CONSULTANT

"Our communities are what we make them. We as a Nation have before us the opportunity — and the responsibility — to remold our cities, to improve our patterns of community development, and to provide for the housing needs of all segments of our population. Meeting these goals will contribute to the Nation's economic recovery and its long-term economic growth. . . . We must begin now to lay the foundation for livable, efficient, and attractive communities of the future."

President John F. Kennedy

(In his Special Message to Congress on our Nation's housing, March 9, 1961.)

A COMMUNITY RENEWAL PROGRAM

Project N. J. R-73 (CR)

Woodbridge Township

Middlesex County, New Jersey

May - 1962

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WOODBRIDGE, N. J.

Prepared by: WOODBRIDGE REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY

In cooperation with: HOUSING AND HOME FINANCE AGENCY,
URBAN RENEWAL ADMINISTRATION

Consultants: VICTOR GRUEN ASSOCIATES
Architecture • Engineering • Planning
New York • Chicago • Los Angeles

LARRY SMITH AND COMPANY
Economic and Financial Consultant
Seattle • New York • Washington

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Fr. William H. Payne	*Chairman*
Andrew S. Lockie	*Vice Chairman*
Stephen H. Rinyak	*Treasurer*
Konrad Stern	*Commissioner*
George Polkowski	*Commissioner*
Isadore Rosenblum	*Commissioner*
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John Evanko, Jr. George Emery	*Committeemen — Fifth Ward*
Joseph A. Manzione	*Chairman — Planning & Development Committee*

TO THE CITIZENS OF WOODBRIDGE:

"We need distance in our eyes . . ."

Mr. Stewart Udall, Secretary of the Interior

We stand today at the open door of a new — and possibly final — opportunity. Woodbridge Township can and should be one of the most magnificent municipalities in the State of New Jersey.

This Community Renewal Program is the plan for our Crusade to tackle the problem of redevelopment, rehabilitation and conservation. This plan will provide our citizens and future citizens with a municipality they can take pride in.

Our Woodbridge Redevelopment Agency is undertaking the coordination and effectuation of our Urban Renewal Programs. The Citizens Redevelopment Committee is part of this task force in cooperation with the Woodbridge Redevelopment Agency.

While our goals, as stated in this Community Renewal Program, might seem bold and drastic, they CAN be achieved. All that is needed is "Distance in our eyes . . ." to see our problems clearly and attack them with courage, vigor, enthusiasm, intelligence, determination and hard work.

We CAN and WILL revitalize our fine Woodbridge Township.

Walter Zirpolo
Mayor

Andrew S. Lockie
Vice Chairman

Stephan H. Rinyak
Treasurer

George Polkowski
Commissioner

Isadore Rosenblum
Commissioner

Konrad Stern
Commissioner

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

We present herewith the Community Renewal Program for Woodbridge Township.

This ten-year projection is not merely a plan, but a scheduled action program in conformity to this plan.

The Commissioners of the Woodbridge Redevelopment Agency have worked long and hard for the past year, without monetary compensation, in the firm belief that to the maximum extent the problems affecting the daily lives of our people can be solved through local initiative.

We are fully cognizant of the responsibility we have undertaken. We are extremely grateful to the Federal Government for having the awareness and desire to make possible the redevelopment of our municipalities. Without federal financial assistance, such progress would be economically impossible. We are equally grateful to the elected officials of our Township for having the vision and aggressive spirit of leadership which directed our participation in the Community Renewal Program. We also thank our Staff and all the employees of our Township who have so fully cooperated in the preparation of this program.

This Community Renewal Program, as approved and adopted, will be the foundation for all Urban Renewal Activity in Woodbridge Township.

This report will be available to the public with the desire for promotion of increased understanding and support for this Community Renewal which so vitally affects the great majority of our people.

Fr. William H. Payne
Chairman, Woodbridge Redevelopment Agency

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

A logical question would be, "Why a Community Renewal Program?"

As far back as May, 1960, when the Woodbridge Redevelopment Agency was created, the Commissioners felt that to proceed with specific Urban Renewal projects without a complete awareness and understanding of all factors involved would be hazardous and unwise. In meetings with the Citizens Redevelopment Committee; Businessmen's Groups; Industrial Groups; Civic Groups; Members of the Clergy and the Press, there was unanimity of agreement — that an overall examination was necessary in order to supply the road map for our journey towards reaching the goal of the best possible Urban Renewal Program for Woodbridge Township.

The Woodbridge Redevelopment Agency was created in response to an awareness of decline and deterioration in certain parts of the Township. It is made up of six members or Commissioners. Five of these members are appointed by the Township Committee and one is appointed by the State. They are appointed for terms of five years and they serve without compensation. One of the members serves as Chairman, one as Vice-Chairman, and one as Treasurer.

The Commissioners of the Woodbridge Redevelopment Agency could have followed in the footsteps of other "project-minded" communities. They could have set out to demolish the blighted areas and redevelop them. The areas needing rehabilitation could have been tackled — probably with a clean-up, paint-up, code enforcement campaign. The quarry, swamp and clay-pit areas could have been land filled and sold to redevelopers for private development. But there were too many questions for which we had no answers:

1. Is Main Street where Main Street should be?

   Is it in the "Central Hub" of Township activity and road network?

   Should Main Street be possibly "A Miracle Mile" on one of our super highways?

   Should it be just a shopping center, or might it encompass a motel, office building, civic center, recreational center, social center, high rise apartment dwellings, etc.?

2. How and why did each blighted or downgraded area get that way?

   Was it the age of the buildings, surrounding areas, lack of municipal services, inadequate public improvements, the type of people living in the area, zoning regulations, or some other reason?

   Would modern reconstruction without a careful analysis of these and other factors only create other blighted areas 20 years hence?

3. What would be the best possible treatment for the clay-pits, swamp land, quarry land and waterfront?

4. How could we keep our Urban Renewal activities of today from being a hindrance to our advanced determinations 5 or 10 years from today?

5. What consideration and provision could be given for parks and playgrounds and civic and social facilities today, without having a 10 year plan for the entire municipality?

Only through a Community Renewal Program could we gain the answers to our complex problems and produce a coordinated, integrated program for the future.

Thus, Woodbridge Township became one of the first communities in the United States to undertake a Community Renewal Program and furthermore, it was the first Community to enter into this type of evaluation program prior to any specific Urban Renewal Project activity.

The major costs of Urban Renewal are financed with federal grants and the locality's share of the cost may be offset to a large degree by liberal, capital improvement credits.

Judged on any ground, Community Renewal is a challenge to our Township, our people, and, indeed, to our way of life. Community Renewal represents an investment which will yield returns in property values, but more importantly, in the human values which are basic to the preservation of our well-being.

We have no choice but to go forward vigorously in meeting this challenge.

S. Buddy Harris, *Executive Director*
Woodbridge Redevelopment Agency

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INTRODUCTION TO COMMUNITY RENEWAL

Congress, in 1949, announced a national housing policy of "a decent home and a suitable living environment for every American family". Urban Renewal can perhaps be best described as the principal tool in achieving this goal.

In 1934, The Congress enacted the National Housing Act, which established the Federal Housing Administration and the principle of government insurance of residential mortgages. The FHA revolutionized financing in the home mortgage market by introducing the practice of mortgage amortization—the annual partial reduction of the principal of the mortgage loan—and mortgage insurance. In addition, standards of material, design, and workmanship were required to be met as a condition for the approval of loans.

New features have been developed by subsequent amendments to the 1934 Act, including the creation of the Federal National Mortgage Association to provide support and flexibility to the mortgage market.

Housing Act of 1949

The Urban Renewal Program was initiated in the Housing Act of 1949, and has been substantially broadened and extended by subsequent amendments, particularly the Housing Act of 1954, which added the concept of rehabilitation and conservation to the clearance and redevelopment established by the 1949 Act. This program, along with several others, is directed by the Administrator of the Housing and Home Finance Agency, which is the executive office established to carry out the principal housing, home finance and community development functions of the Federal Government.

The Housing Act of 1949, as amended, authorizes the Housing and Home Finance Administrator to carry out a program of urban renewal through loans and grants to local public authorities.

Under this law, grants may provide the Federal share of the net cost of redevelopment projects. The percentage varies depending upon the size of the community and other factors. Net cost is defined as the total of the expenditures necessary to carry out a project less the value of land sold or leased. The local share of the net cost may be either in cash or in the form of "non-cash grants-in-aid", such as land donations, public works, and the like. The law also provides for Federal advances for the locality's planning of projects, as well as temporary Federal loans to provide working capital during the execution stages of a project.

The 1949 Housing Act made it possible for public and private groups, acting jointly, to clear slums, redevelop a cleared area and to provide housing. Although this Housing Act was known primarily as a "slum clearance act", it contained the elements of the complete urban renewal approach by requiring that land use, public utilities, streets, etc., of the redevelopment plan must conform to a general plan of the community as a whole. The 1954 Act provided a more comprehensive approach by aiming at the causes as well as the consequences of slums. It contemplated a three-pronged approach to the problem: (1) preventive measures through neighborhood conservation and housing code enforcement, (2) rehabilitation of structures and neighborhoods worth saving, and (3) clearance and redevelopment of structures and neighborhoods beyond saving. Thus the terms, conservation and rehabilitation were added to the urban renewal vocabulary.

These terms, once loosely used in city planning and allied fields, have now acquired fairly precise and wide-spread meanings through official definitions by the Housing and Home Finance Agency.

Conservation

"The protection from blighting influences of good neighborhoods and structures, and their preservation in a safe and sound state.

"Conservation also is the prevention of further deterioration in declining areas, in which the majority of structures are not in need of major repairs, by improving or eliminating undesirable structures and through improvements in accordance with a community plan, plus effective enforcement of building, housing, zoning, and related codes."

Rehabilitation

"The restoration to good condition of deteriorated structures, neighborhoods, and public facilities.

"Structural and facility rehabilitation may involve repair, renovation, conversion, expansion, remodeling, or construction.

"Rehabilitation is undertaken to achieve physical quality approaching —or even sometimes exceeding—a quality comparing favorably with that of the well-maintained older properties and with newer ones. Rehabilitation increases the useful life and value of the property. Neighborhood rehabilitation encompasses structural rehabilitation and, in addition, may extend to street improvements and a provision of such amenities as parks and playgrounds."

Redevelopment

"The development or improvement of cleared or undeveloped land in an urban renewal area."

The 1954 Act further amended the Housing Act of 1949 and the National Housing Act by providing funds for urban renewal demonstration projects and for urban planning assistance; and by authorizing liberal FHA mortgage insurance for the purpose of encouraging private construction of housing on land cleared by the renewal process, and private construction and rehabilitation of low-cost housing to provide for the relocation of families displaced by renewal activities and by other governmental actions. The law also contained the significant requirement that a community must have a "workable program" (Program for Community Improvement) before it could be eligible to receive any of the various Federal aids for this purpose.

Community Renewal Program

Another important amendment to The Housing Act of 1949 was passed in 1959—the provision of Federal assistance for Community Renewal Programs. This came from a realization that much of the action over the past two decades has produced rather disappointing results, which in many cases appeared to stem from urban renewal decisions made on a project-by-project basis. The law prescribes that a Community Renewal Program is to be city-wide in scope and shall include both residential and non-residential areas. Its basic purpose is to identify and measure, in broad terms, the total need for urban renewal in the community, to relate this need to the resources available to the community, and to develop a long-range program for urban renewal action. Additional features in the 1961 Housing Act have made the Housing Act of 1949, as amended, together with the National Housing Act and the United States Housing Act of 1937, more effective. They provide all the assistance necessary to a community which has the will and the desire to plan and intelligently control its growth.

Program Objectives

The objectives of the Community Renewal Program for Woodbridge were outlined to include a broad range of study:

(a) analysis of the region and its significance to the community;

(b) analysis of the existing and proposed physical and economic structure of the Township;

(c) evaluation of the present governmental organization;

(d) evaluation of the legal devices for controlling and guiding the present and future physical development within the Township;

(e) analysis of the financial capacity of the municipality;

(f) preparation of standards and criteria for evaluating the present physical condition of the community;

(g) investigation of the problems of physical structure and composition for both the Township as a whole and section by section;

(h) identification of areas of the Township requiring physical reorganization and improvement, and classification of these areas by type of assistance warranted;

(i) development of a conceptual form for the future image of the Township;

(j) preliminary analysis of specific study areas and the economic resources available to deal with problems indicated;

(k) assignment of priorities for a community program of action and for specific project implementation, and

(l) recommendation of the administrative and governmental organization changes necessary for program implementation and of the codes and ordinances essential to guiding new development within the Township.

Community Goals:

- *The maintenance of Woodbridge's territorial integrity (political geographic unity) by encouraging unified cooperation and participation in solving the problems of the Township as a whole*
- *The achievement of a unified township identity by emphasizing, wherever possible, personal association with the Township as a whole rather than the individual neighborhoods*
- *The protection and improvement of Woodbridge's economic stability by encouraging a better balance of land use*
- *The renewal and modernization of the Township's physical structure by the gradual upgrading and improvement of rundown areas*
- *The achievement of a greater degree of order in the use of land by encouraging the grouping of compatible land uses and by keeping incompatible uses separate*
- *The improvement of the Township's local road system, especially the connectors between the various neighborhoods*
- *The improvement and expansion of Woodbridge's cultural resources and its community facilities and services through the development of new parks, playgrounds, civic buildings, recreation activities, etc.*
- *The preservation of the Township's natural assets by encouraging the most beneficial development or use of the waterfront, stream beds, etc.*

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The Community Renewal Program proposes:

Updating and expansion of the Woodbridge master plan studies;

A program of planned industrial expansion including the development of an industrial park with possibly an air-strip or heliport;

Creation of a new Woodbridge "downtown" conveniently located near the center of the Township;

Reshaping the neighborhood centers into compact, efficient shopping areas with stores and services necessary for the day-to-day needs of the local residents;

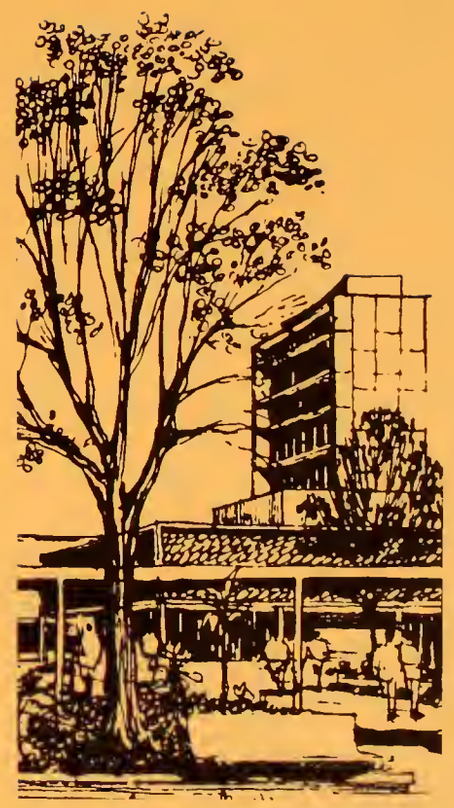
Revitalization of Main Street, Woodbridge as a neighborhood center rather than the Township center;

Carrying out a survey of desired public or capital improvements and establishing a planned capital improvement program;

A comprehensive review and strengthening of the Township codes and ordinances, especially the subdivision ordinance, zoning ordinance and housing code.

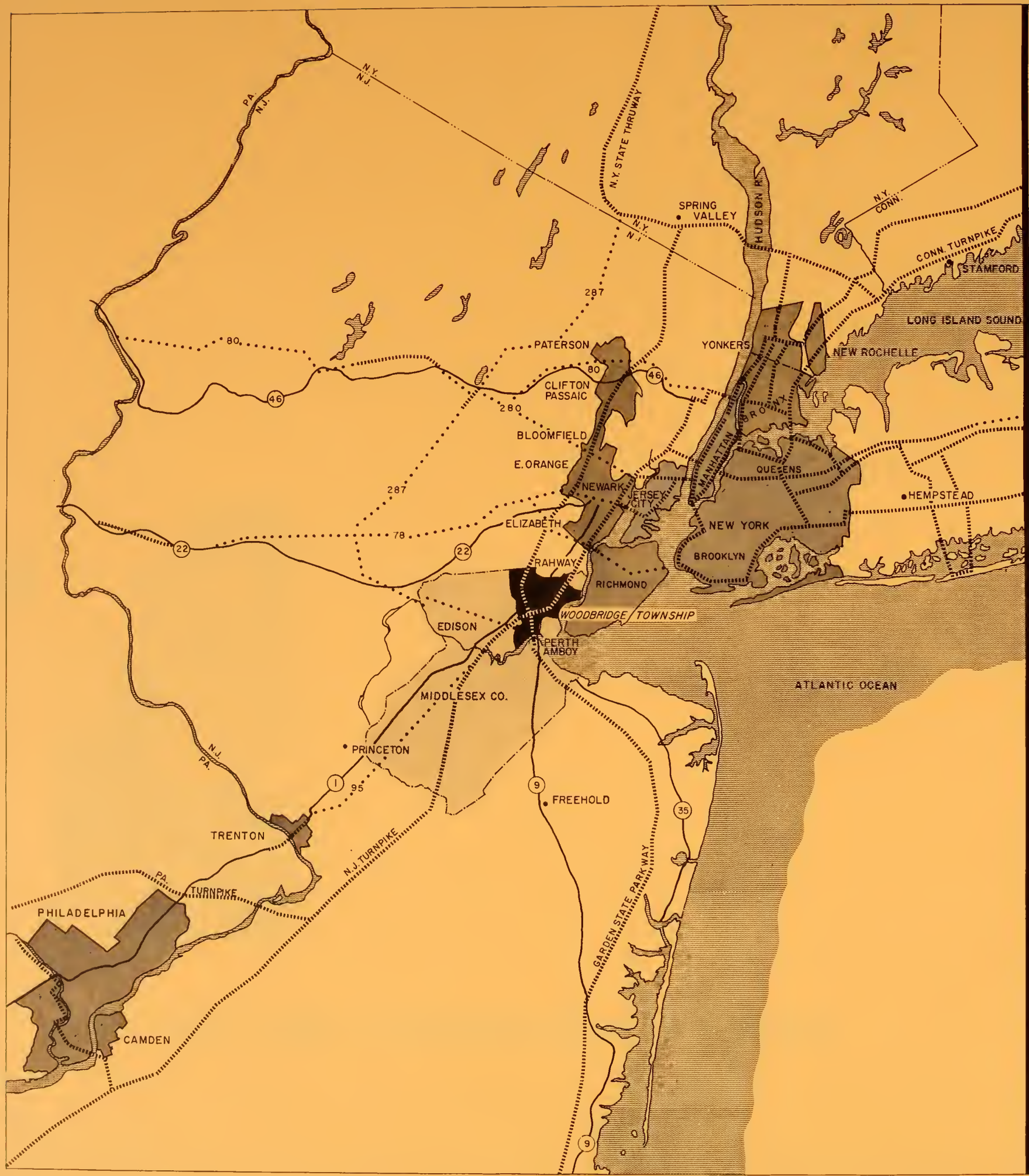
"When we think of the future of our cities, we must realize that with all that planners, designers and builders can contribute and with all the help Government can give, nothing will be done except what the people who live in the cities want to be done . . . an expression of the determination of the people that conditions be changed and as a commitment by them to work for that change, is the foundation on which must rest all efforts to halt the decay of a city and to restore it to full health as a community of decent homes and a center of cultural and economic activity."

Robert C. Weaver, *Administrator*
Housing and Home Finance Agency



PART 1 – BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS

WOODBRIDGE AND THE REGION



0 5 10 15 20
SCALE IN MILES

NORTH

COMMUNITY RENEWAL PROGRAM

WOODBRIDGE, N.J.

WOODBRIDGE REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY

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Chapter I – HISTORY OF WOODBRIDGE

The land comprising most of the Township of Woodbridge was purchased from a local Indian tribe in 1664. The summer of the following year found the first settlers arriving and in 1666, articles were drawn up establishing both Woodbridge and Piscataway as Plantations or Townships.

Although authorization was given in December, 1667, for Woodbridge to be mapped, it was not until June, 1669 that the Township was finally chartered.

During this period, most activity was taking place about ten miles to the north, at Elizabeth, then called Elizabethtown. This was the major port of entry and, as ships arrived from England and other parts of Europe, more and more newcomers made their way along the tidal marshes bordering the Arthur Kill waterway to Carteret and Woodbridge. Newark was founded about the same time. It is interesting to note that for about the first seven years, this city, now one of nearly a half million people, had a smaller population than Woodbridge.

The Township boundaries were originally laid out along natural features and included several areas which later became separate communities, such as Metuchen Boro and Edison Township. Land was set aside for educational (Free School Lands) and governmental purposes.

During Revolutionary times the Governor's residence usually was located in Perth Amboy just to the south. Although Elizabethtown was the official Capitol of New Jersey, the Legislature met in various other communities. In 1790, Trenton became the permanent seat of government, thus shifting State governmental activities away from the northern New Jersey area.

The year 1800 saw the completion of two turnpikes crossing Woodbridge. One, now known in Woodbridge as the Lincoln Highway or Route 27, ran from New York to Philadelphia. The other, New Brunswick Avenue, linked Perth Amboy with Bound Brook to the west.

In 1839, the New Jersey Railroad (now the Pennsylvania) was completed between Jersey City and Philadelphia, bringing with it the first commuters. These early suburbanites, largely professional and executive people, were thus enabled to enjoy "country living" and still continue to work in the New York area.

In 1860, Rahway broke away from Woodbridge to become part of Union County; ten years later, Raritan (now Edison) Township came into being, further reducing the area of Woodbridge.

At this time, the main industries were clay mining and brick manufacturing. The original workers in these industries were mostly from Ireland and Germany; by the end of this century, people from Hungary began arriving to work in the clay and stone mines. Woodbridge's first industry was located on the site of the present Woodbridge Lumber Company on Rahway Avenue. Here stoneware and firebrick were manufactured.

In 1878, the Sewaren Hotel was constructed, and by 1885, this section of the Township had become popular as a shore vacation spot for wealthy New Yorkers. Boynton Beach was the most popular place in Sewaren. It contained bath houses, a dance pavilion, and picnic grove. Fishing boats were available for rent, and a steamboat carrying passengers from New York docked there daily.

The remainder of the 1800's saw gradual development of the highway and railroad systems along the entire eastern seaboard. Along with this came macadamized roads, water mains, gas lighting, electricity, telephone service, a trolley line, and a sewer system.

In the early part of the 1900's, heavy industry came to the Woodbridge area. Chemical and petroleum refining plants, with their requirements for abundance of water, large areas of open land, availability of rail service, and deep water transportation were attracted to the sparsely inhabited shores of Arthur Kill, the long narrow channel separating New Jersey and Staten Island. The concentration of industries in the area has had both favorable and unfavorable effects. The industries supply an important source of tax revenue and employment to the Township while at the same time they are the sources of some concomitant nuisances. Advances in technology are gradually making it possible to eliminate the unfavorable while retaining the favorable.

In 1916, a movement was started by a group of citizens in Woodbridge to annex Fords, Keasbey, and Hopelawn to Perth Amboy. The Township Committee took immediate steps to stop the move and after intensive activity, including the circulation of petitions and a committee trip to Trenton, the movement was defeated.

During the First World War, most of Colonia served as a site for an Army hospital. The hospital, known as U.S. Army General Hospital No. 3, covered the area between Middlesex Avenue and Colonia Boulevard. It was dismantled in 1920, and much of this land is now devoted to large, estate-type homes.

In 1922, an attempt was made to annex part of Sewaren to Perth Amboy, but the attempt failed because of the opposition of the Sewaren residents.

The first step toward the construction of a park in downtown Woodbridge was taken by the Township Committee in 1923, when $425 was appropriated to grade and improve the Township property between Pearl Street and School Street. This land has been developed into a fine park.

In 1929, a petition was filed by Shell Eastern Petroleum Products, Inc. for permission to lay several oil lines under State Street in Sewaren to be used in connection with a new refinery and oil storage field. Considerable debate followed as nearly everyone in the Township expressed strong opinion in one direction or the other. A hearing was set for April 8, and after nearly three hours of testimony the application was approved by the Township Committee by a vote of 4 to 2. 1929 also saw the opening of U.S. Route 1 and State Route 25.

Severe storms hit the Township in 1941, devastating a whole section of Hopelawn and causing a great deal of damage in other areas.

Following the end of the war in 1945, the Public Service Company completed a multi-million dollar power generating plant in Sewaren. This brought to Woodbridge an important new industry, valuable ratables, and a source of employment.

WOODBRIDGE AND VICINITY

SOURCE: U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY MAPS

0 4000 8000 2 MILES 16000
SCALE IN FEET

NORTH

COMMUNITY RENEWAL PROGRAM

WOODBRIDGE, N.J.

WOODBRIDGE REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY

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Transportation

More recently, State highway programs have brought to Woodbridge and to Middlesex County, of which Woodbridge is a part, the New Jersey Turnpike and the Garden State Parkway which are, and will remain, significant elements in the physical structure of the Township.

The Turnpike, a toll road, provides a direct route from the Hudson River tunnels and the George Washington Bridge to Baltimore and Washington by way of the Delaware Memorial Bridge. It also connects directly to the Pennsylvania Turnpike, which makes it possible to drive on expressways as far as Chicago. Intersecting the Turnpike in Woodbridge is the Garden State Parkway, a partial toll road, acclaimed as one of the world's safest highways. Generally, it is limited to passenger vehicles and gets its fullest use during the summer months because of its access to many points along the Jersey shore. Connecting Cape May, at the southern tip of the state, with the densely populated Newark-Paterson area, it joins the New York Thruway at Spring Valley, New York.

Paralleling the Parkway across the Raritan River, which is the southern boundary of the Township, is U.S. Route 9, a major divided highway connecting U.S. Route 1 with Freehold and other points to the south. Route 9, along with State Route 35, are the original shore highways and at one time carried much of the traffic now served by the Parkway.

The crossing of the Turnpike, the Parkway, and Route 9 form what is probably the most complex highway interchange in the state. Within an area of one square mile, a total of eighteen lanes of traffic are distributed in no less than eight identifiable directions.

Near this interchange and cutting diagonally across the Township is U.S. Route 1, the principal non-toll road between New York and Philadelphia. This road is fourth in importance in the Township with regard to traffic volume. Originally constructed as a divided highway with raised center islands, it has recently been rebuilt replacing the center islands with an almost continuous concrete barrier.

Other roads of importance are State Routes 35 and 27. These are both non-divided, two-lane highways serving primarily local traffic. State Route 440 links U.S. Route 9 and the Parkway with Perth Amboy and the Outerbridge Crossing to Staten Island. A half-dozen other less important roads complete the major highway network. See the drawing, "Circulation," on the next page.

An addition to this intensely developed road system will be constructed by 1970. With the completion of the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge between Brooklyn and Staten Island in 1965, it is anticipated that there will be a substantial increase in traffic on the Outerbridge Crossing and Goethals Bridge, both of which connect New Jersey with Staten Island. To help accommodate this increase, Interstate Route 287, a new east-west expressway is to be constructed by the New Jersey State Highway Department across the southern end of Woodbridge. It will connect Outerbridge to, and become part of, a 65-mile circumferential expressway around the entire urbanized portion of Northeast New Jersey. As of now only a few miles of this express route are in use. However, by 1970 most of it should be completed.

Benjamin Chinitz in his book, *Freight and the Metropolis*, Harvard University Press, 1960, has this to say about the new highway: "But, while all outlying areas will gain from these developments (the circumferential highway among others) some stand to gain more than others. The familiar freight advantages of Middlesex County, athwart the main routes to Philadelphia and beyond, may lose some of their force. When the eye moves clockwise from Middlesex on the map, it passes through the counties of Somerset, Morris, western Passaic, western Bergen, and Rockland. When a high-speed circumferential truck route links these areas with the New Jersey Turnpike to the south and the New York State Thruway to the north, they will become more competitive with Middlesex."

Chinitz considers the effect on Middlesex County of the Verrazano-Narrows bridge: "Even when the island (Staten Island) is linked with New York City by the Narrows Bridge, industries with national markets are not likely to favor the island over such locations as Middlesex County."

In summary, it may be seen that, from the standpoint of industrial development, Middlesex County, and Woodbridge with it, will be benefited by the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge and adversely affected by completion of Route 287.

The Pennsylvania Railroad and the Jersey Central Railroad provide excellent freight service from Woodbridge to New York, Philadelphia, and beyond. The Reading Railroad and Lehigh Valley Railroad provide service to the west. Passenger service is available on the Pennsylvania and on the Jersey Central. Together they daily carry approximately 850 Woodbridge commuters into Newark and New York, a trip of approximately 30 minutes. About 525 use the Jersey Central and 325 use the Pennsylvania.

Recently bus service has been expanded. The Public Service Company currently operates a total of twenty-two express buses into New York City each day. Most buses originate at Perth Amboy and, after three intermediate stops, go directly to the Port Authority bus terminal in New York. The average time from Main Street, Woodbridge, to New York is about 55 minutes, and the number of commuters averages about 130 each week day.

The predominating chemical and petroleum refining industrial character of the area has been previously noted. Of the estimated 118,000 jobs in the county, approximately 55 percent are in manufacturing, making Middlesex the most industrialized of any major New Jersey County.

Railroads were primarily responsible for the original industry. However, the last decade has seen trucks, with the advantage they offer of more diversified and flexible service, take over much of the industrial freight. This corresponds to a nationwide trend: the growth of the trucking industry has generally been accompanied by a severe decline in the use of the railroads. Although some decline has occurred here, it seems to be less pronounced than in most areas. New Jersey, and particularly Middlesex County today still have good rail service.

CIRCULATION

LEGEND

- EXPRESSWAYS
- PROPOSED INTERSTATE 287
- PRIMARY THROUGH
- SECONDARY THROUGH
- PRIMARY LOCAL
- SECONDARY LOCAL
- RAILROADS

SCALE IN FEET: 0 — 2000 — 4000 — 1 MILE — 8000

NORTH

COMMUNITY RENEWAL PROGRAM

WOODBRIDGE, N.J.

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Population Growth Trends

The population trends for the last 40 years in the State of New Jersey, Middlesex County, and Woodbridge Township indicate steadily increasing growth. Since 1940, the growth rate has been considerably accelerated over the previous growth rate from 1930 to 1940. The State of New Jersey ranked eighth on the national scale according to total population figures for 1960. The increase from 1950 to 1960 amounted to 1,231,453 people.

According to the 1960 Census of Population, of the 21 counties in New Jersey, Middlesex experienced the second largest increase in population growth from 1950 to 1960. Bergen County was first. The Middlesex growth of 168,985 people represented a 63.8% increase over the 1950 population.

This phenomenal growth has been shared by Woodbridge Township as witnessed by the fact that the population in the Township increased by 43,088 people or an increase of 120% in 1960 over 1950. The current population in Woodbridge is almost three times the 1940 population.

Table 1 indicates population projections for the New York-Northeastern New Jersey consolidated area and for Middlesex County for selected years.

Table 1

Regional Population Projections

	1960	*1965*	*1975*	*1985*
New York-Northeastern New Jersey Consolidated Area	14,759,000	16,257,000	18,239,000	20,056,000
Middlesex County	433,856	553,000	845,000	1,175,000

SOURCE: *Metropolis 1985*, by Raymond Vernon, Harvard University Press, 1960.

The above indicates that the areas considered will experience substantial population increases over the next 25 years. It is estimated that Middlesex will increase by 741,000 persons during this period, thus obtaining 5.8% of the anticipated growth in the New York-Northeastern New Jersey consolidated area.

Table 2 shows estimated population projections made by the Research and Statistics Section, New Jersey Department of Conservation and Economic Development.

Table 2

State Population Projections

	1960	*1965*	*1975*	*1985*
State of New Jersey	6,066,782	6,666,790	7,890,800	9,084,500

From this it may be seen that the State of New Jersey will have almost 50% of the total population estimated for the region by the year 1985.

Table 3 shows the relationship of growth in Woodbridge Township to surrounding areas in Middlesex County. It will be noted from this table that Clark Township to the north of Woodbridge, Edison Township to the west, and Sayreville to the south have all shown considerable growth since 1950; all three experienced growth rates exceeding 100%. While these surrounding communities show a larger percentage growth rate, Woodbridge Township shows the largest numerical increase.

Table 3

Population Growth in Woodbridge and Surrounding Communities

			10-Year Change	
	1950	*1960*	*Number*	*Percent*
Perth Amboy City	41,330	38,007	—3,323	—8.7
New Brunswick City	38,811	40,139	2,328	3.4
Edison Township	16,348	44,799	28,451	174.0
Carteret Borough	13,030	20,502	7,472	57.3
Metuchen Borough	9,879	14,041	4,162	42.1
Sayreville	10,338	22,553	12,215	118.1
Clark Township	4,352	12,195	7,843	180.2
Rahway City	21,290	27,699	6,409	30.1
Woodbridge Township	35,758	78,846	43,088	120.4

SOURCE: 1950 and 1960 U. S. Census of Population.

Continued population growth in Woodbridge Township is contingent on the availability of land suitable for residential construction. As will be noted below, approximately 1,900 acres of undeveloped land remain for future residential use. Assuming 30 percent of this total is developed in roads, parks, schools, etc., the remaining 1,330 acres could accommodate a little less than 30,000 people, which, added to the 1960 figure, would stabilize the population at approximately 110,000 people. This estimate is based on a continuation of the same density as now exists (approximately 22 persons per net residential acre) for single-family dwellings. Present zoning permits some two-family and multi-family dwellings which could raise the estimate of 30,000.

Table 4

Woodbridge Population Projections Under Present Zoning

	1960	*1965*	*1975*	*1985*
Woodbridge	78,846	100,000	110-120,000	110-120,000

SOURCE: 1950 and 1960 U. S. Census of Population, and consultants' projections.

It is estimated that 80 percent of the 1,900 acres is in small parcels and single lots. The latter, scattered throughout the Township, will probably take a longer period to market since this type of development would be less attractive to most builders. Discussions with active builders in the Township indicate that the area still contains good market opportunity for future construction of residential units.

Existing Land Uses

The land use pattern in Woodbridge Township can almost be divided into three separate and distinct areas. The western half of the Township is almost exclusively residential. The eastern half of the Township is primarily industrial. Running through the center of the Township between these two predominant uses is the commercial area, serving somewhat as a buffer zone between the residential and industrial areas. Residential uses are, of course, found in all areas; however, the major portion of residential development, particularly the more expensive homes, is on the western side of the Township. Similarly, commercial uses are not completely restricted to the broad band running through the middle of the Township along U. S. Routes 1 and 9, but are also found in scattered neighborhood locations and in downtown Woodbridge.

The present pattern is an increasingly mixed one, particularly in the center strip through the Township. While residential land to the west and industrial land to the east have displayed some stability, the central portions have undergone rapid land use change and mixing. Old and new patterns are imposed upon each other, with new highways creating important land-use boundaries.

Table 5

Land Development Potential Under Existing Zoning

Category Of Use	*Zoned*	*Used*	*Left to Develop**
		Land in Acres	
Residential, Parks, Public, etc.	6,900	5,000	1,900
Business Commercial	1,075	360	715
Industry	6,100	560	5,540
TOTAL	14,075	5,920	8,155

*Gross area (includes streets, swamps, etc.)

As will be seen in later sections, and based on analyses made in those sections, it appears that there is an imbalance between land remaining for residential development and land for industrial development. Of further additional significance is the fact that well over 70% of the land zoned for commercial use remains for development. As growth continues, the demand for this land will be in response to the market, although at present there seems to be enough commercially zoned land for the Township.

Commercial Uses

In the past few years, the retail focal point has been Menlo Park, a regional shopping center with parking space for more than 7,000 vehicles. This center is located on U.S. Route 1 about a half mile outside the Woodbridge Township boundary. When fully developed, it is to include two department stores, a movie theater, and approximately 65 smaller stores.

Plans have recently been announced for a new $8 million shopping center in Woodbridge. As presently planned, the center is to include numerous stores and shops, with S. Klein on the Square, a department store with headquarters in New York, forming the hub. The site, containing about 50 acres, is located on the north side of U. S. Route 1 near the intersection of Gill Lane. The center as proposed will bring to Woodbridge a major regional shopping facility similar to Menlo Park and will unquestionably play a major role in shaping the future of the Township.

Experience has shown that, normally, projects such as Menlo Park attract additional retailers to the fringe areas surrounding the site. An illustration of this is the development of numerous freestanding stores on the fringe property of the Garden State Plaza in Paramus, New Jersey. Consequently, it is likely that much regional retail expansion will take place in the vicinity of Menlo Park in the immediate future.

With the completion of the new shopping center in Woodbridge, additional retail expansion can be expected in the areas surrounding this site.

Of some regional importance is the area adjacent to the intersection of State Route 440 and U.S. Route 9. Several major retail establishments have recently been constructed here and with the completion of Interstate Route 287, this area can be expected to attract an important share of the over-all retail growth.

As noted, the older business districts in Woodbridge serve neighborhoods as opposed to regional areas. Poor access and the lack of major facilities limit the impact that such districts have on a broad market. The inclusion of a dominant retail facility in each established district is not likely. Consequently, future sales opportunities available to each district will be restricted to the growth occurring within the trade area tributary to each cluster. Moreover, almost all new sales opportunities could be absorbed by existing facilities. Thus, even sizeable increases in volume potential would not reflect any significant demand for facilities or land.

Residential Uses

In view of the current zoning regulations and based upon past trends in real estate development in the Township, it can be assumed that building activity will be confined largely to the construction of single-family residences. It can further be assumed that construction will be in the category of new residences on new land rather than demolition of older housing and the reconstruction of housing on the cleared land. This assumption is based on the fact that the 1960 U.S. Census showed a total of only 193 housing units in a dilapidated condition out of the 21,359 total housing units. Market factors over the past decade have shown little demand for multi-story apartments. Recently, however, proposals for several such apartments have been received by the Township, and this interest can be expected to continue.

It is assumed that 1,330 acres of the remaining 1,900 will be used for building purposes, the remainder going into roads, etc. Assuming an average of 1,100 permits per year and assuming minimum lot sizes of 7,500 square feet, approximately 190 acres a year would be absorbed in the future.

Industrial Uses

It has been noted that the entire northeastern New Jersey region has experienced considerable industrial growth in past years. Because of its

EXISTING LAND USE

LEGEND

GENERALIZED PREDOMINANT USE

- RESIDENTIAL
- COMMERCIAL
- PUBLIC AND SEMI-PUBLIC
  - E ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
  - JHS JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL
  - HS SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL
  - VS COUNTY VOCATIONAL SCHOOL
  - C CEMETERY
  - CC COUNTRY CLUB
  - SPF STATE PRISON FARM
  - M MUNICIPAL BUILDING
  - PH PUBLIC HOUSING
  - S SEWAGE TREATMENT PLANT
- PARKS AND PLAYGROUNDS
- INDUSTRIAL
- VACANT

SOURCE: TAX REVALUATION SURVEY - 1959
INFORMATION REVISED - 1961

0 2000 4000 1 MILE 8000
SCALE IN FEET

NORTH

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excellent location for such facilities, Middlesex County has shared in this growth and now is the home of nearly 1,000 industries. Woodbridge Township, in a strategic position within the county, has naturally shared in this growth. While industrial uses have not absorbed land within the Township at a very rapid rate in past years, it can expect some acceleration because open spaces suitable for industrial sites are becoming difficult to obtain in areas closer to the New York metropolitan core.

Table 6 gives some indication of the industrial activity which has taken place in Woodbridge Township in the 10 year period between 1950 and 1960. The table also points out that, at an average rate, these industries have absorbed land at the rate of 25 acres per year. While this listing reflects only the larger industries, records available from the Middlesex County Industrial Commission and from the Department of Conservation & Economic Development indicate that for the past five years, the industrial activity in Woodbridge Township has been characterized by the establishment of numerous small local industrial concerns.

Table 6

Major Industries Entering Woodbridge 1950-1960*
Showing Land Absorption Rate

Name	*Year of Entry*	*Approximate Acreage*
Hess Oil Co.	1960	60.0
Emerson Radio & Phonograph Corp.	1960	9.0
Premier Die Casting Co.	1960	5.0
Koppers Co., Inc., Wood Preserving Division	1958	35.0
Ronson Corp.	1958	6.0
Koppers Co., Inc., Plastics Division	1956	55.0
Prodex Corp.	1956	8.0
Eastern Metal Converters Inc.	1954	1.0
Minerals & Chemicals Corp. of America	1954	17.0
Monarch Cabinet Corp.	1953	2.5
Radio Corporation of America	1953	17.5
Oliver Mfg. Supply Co.	1950	10.0
Russell-Stanley Corp.	1950	3.0
Woodbridge Sanitary Pottery Corp.	1950	18.0
TOTAL Acres Absorbed		247.0

*Information obtained from Middlesex County Industrial Commission.

NOTE: 247 acres divided by ten-year period equals average rate of 24.7 or 25 acres per year.

Based on a record of industrial permits obtained from the real estate office in the Woodbridge Municipal Building, a considerable portion of industrial activity in recent years in the Woodbridge area has been additions to existing plants.

On the basis of the data in Table 6 plus an adjustment for small local industries, it has been determined that land has been absorbed by industry at the rate of approximately 30 acres per year in the 10-year period between 1950 and 1960. Table 7 shows projected industrial land absorption. It will be noted that the first line assumes that acreage will be absorbed at a continuing rate of 30 acres per year. The second and third lines of the table are projections at increased acreage assuming the possibility of accelerated growth in industrial use.

Table 7

Industrial Land Absorption

Annual Absorption Rate	*1960*		*1965*		*1970*		*1975*		*1980*	
	Acres in Use	*Zoned Land*	*Acres*	*Zoned Land*	*Acres*	*Zoned Land*	*Acres*	*Zoned Land*	*Acres*	*Zoned Land*
@ 30 acres/ year	560	9%	710	12%	860	14%	1,010	17%	1,160	19%
@ 40 acres/ year	560	9	760	12	960	15	1,160	19	1,360	22
@ 60 acres/ year	560	9	860	14	1,160	19	1,460	24	1,760	29

The most important fact to be noted from the table is that, assuming a continued rate of increase at 30 acres per year, by 1980 only 1,160 acres of the 6,100 acres now zoned for industrial use could be absorbed. Assuming a maximum growth of 60 acres per year, twice the present rate, by 1980 only 1,760 acres of the 6,100 acres could be absorbed. It can be seen then that at a maximum rate of absorption of 60 acres per year, only 29% of the total acreage available would be in use for industrial purposes. It is apparent that the Township has more than enough land to meet industrial demand far into the future.

Chapter III – NEIGHBORHOOD PHYSICAL STRUCTURE AND ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

Existing Neighborhoods

Reference is made in Chapter II to the extensive highway network in the Township. These transportation routes divide the Township into more than sixty segments or parts with some being no larger than a few acres in size. It is within this jigsaw puzzle-like framework that the community is analyzed.

The Township, covering more than twenty-three square miles and containing approximately 80,000 people, has developed into a series of separate, locally identifiable communities or large neighborhoods.

Although these neighborhoods are parts of a single governmental organization, they, in varying degrees, exhibit many of the characteristics of politically independent towns or municipalities. This sectionalism resulted originally from the fact that early settlers tended to group themselves in several areas of the Township. As the land between these centers developed, the physical separation gradually became less pronounced. Consequently, today a boundary between Iselin and Colonia, for instance, is virtually impossible to determine.

As might be expected, an outgrowth of this development is a certain amount of rivalry among the various neighborhoods. Each competes for needed schools, street improvements, etc. A limited amount of such rivalry is not harmful and may, in fact, serve as a stimulus for neighborhood improvement. However, it must be borne in mind that what is best for one neighborhood is not necessarily best for the Township as a whole.

The U. S. Postal system in the Township perhaps best illustrates the problem of sectionalism. Woodbridge is served by a total of eight post offices. Each is named for its particular locality: Woodbridge, Fords, Sewaren, etc., and each employs its own Postmaster. It has been suggested by at least one Postal official that the Township be divided into Postal zones and that the several outlying post offices become branches of a central one in Woodbridge proper. It is likely that over the years such a system would encourage a stronger, more unified identity with the Township.

In terms of the residential segment of the Township, Woodbridge is a predominantly single-family community with a few apartments located near Woodbridge Center and with numerous two-family conversions distributed in the older areas of each of the various neighborhoods.

The most important physical characteristic of the Township is the fragmentation of the areas by the numerous highways, regional expressways, of main and spur line railroads, of gas, oil, and gasoline pipelines, and of high voltage electrical power lines, and by salt marshes, swamps, and heavy industrial concentrations. The result is a collection of small, odd-shaped bits and pieces of land, some related and some not related to the others. This has led to many differing factions in the Township, has prevented the cohesiveness of community identification and could hamper coordinated efforts and cooperation toward community-wide development objectives. The Township, in reality, is a series of smaller communities or neighborhoods, each with its own characteristics, its own aims and objectives. In essence, the Township now lacks a single clear and positive identity.

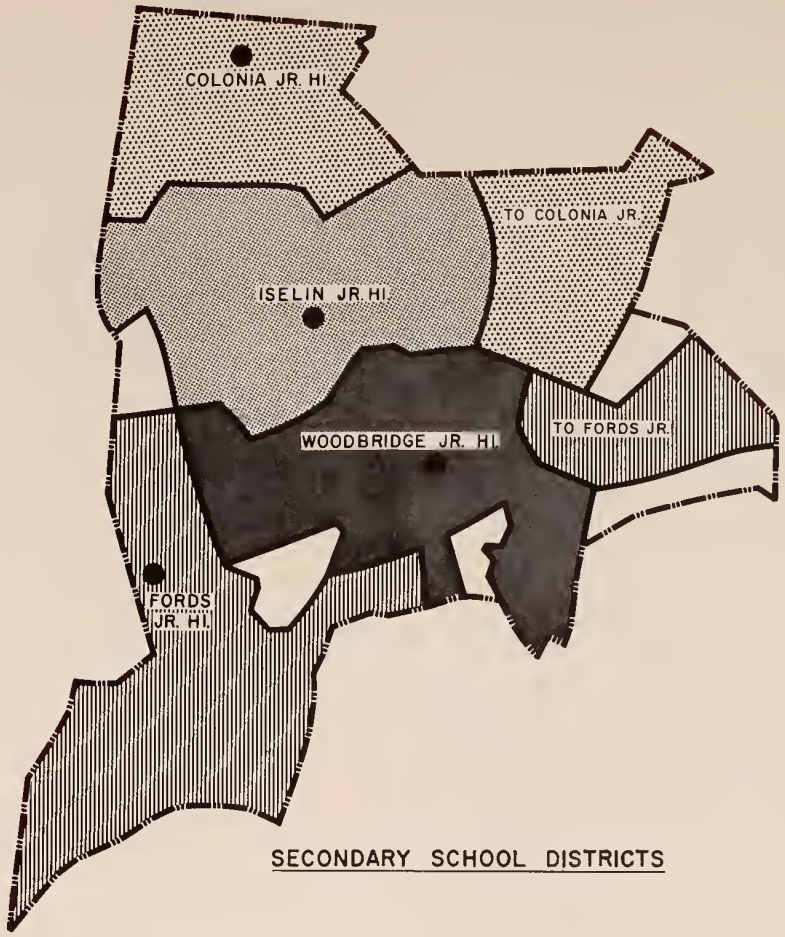
The drawing, "Neighborhood Analysis," on the next page shows the division of the Township with respect to postal and school service areas. It will be noted that there is a wide disparity in boundaries in some of the areas. This is especially evident in Colonia, Iselin, and Avenel. From these maps we have attempted to piece together the segments logically, following as closely as possible the sometimes uncertain social boundaries observed locally. The drawing, "Neighborhoods," shows the resulting neighborhood structure.

To the nine neighborhoods known locally as Port Reading, Sewaren, Hopelawn, Keasbey, Fords, Iselin, Colonia, Avenel, and Woodbridge Center, we have, for the purpose of this study, added two more. The Northeast, made up of parts of Avenel and Port Reading, has been considered separately because of the generally undeveloped nature of the area. For the same reason, the part here referred to as North Fords has similarly been considered.

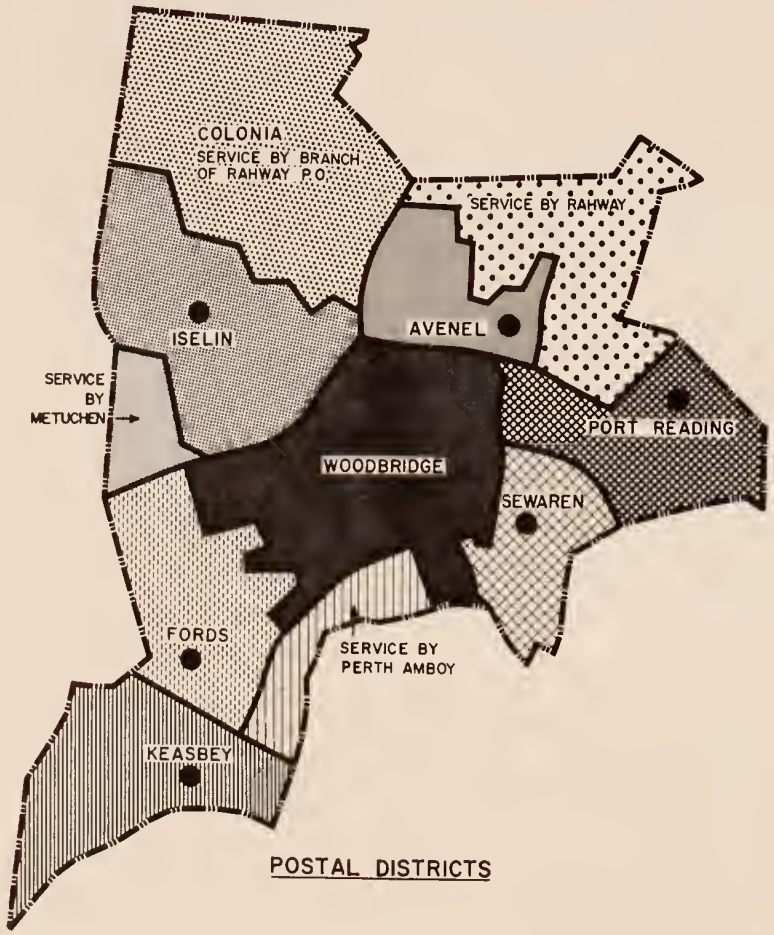
Except for two recent subdivisions, Menlo Park Terrace and Lafayette Estates, North Fords is largely vacant or is devoted to cemetery use. The principal distinguishable physical and environmental characteristics of these eleven neighborhoods of the Township are described on the following pages.

NEIGHBORHOOD ANALYSIS

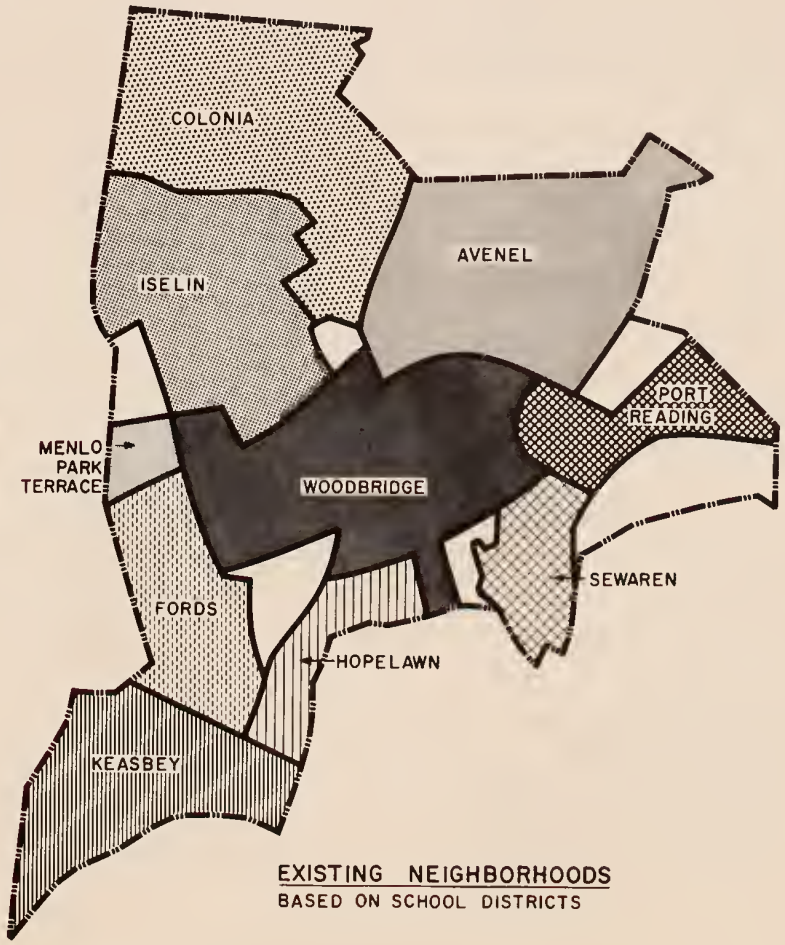
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISTRICTS



SECONDARY SCHOOL DISTRICTS



POSTAL DISTRICTS



EXISTING NEIGHBORHOODS
BASED ON SCHOOL DISTRICTS

0 4000 8000 2 MILES 16000
SCALE IN FEET

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NEIGHBORHOODS

1962

0 2000 4000 1 MILE 8000
SCALE IN FEET

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Port Reading:—This neighborhood encompasses an area of about 1.5 square miles and contains approximately 1,800 people. It consists, basically, of open residential development surrounded and divided by a series of dominant physical and environmental elements. It is located at the crossing of the Jersey Central Railroad and the Reading Railroad and is adjacent to the New Jersey Turnpike. It is bounded by salt marsh, high-level major power lines, old residential development in the adjacent Borough of Carteret, and is in close proximity to Arthur Kill, deepwater-serviced petroleum plants, a power generating station, and railroad coal yards.

These factors combine to create a seemingly unfavorable residential environment. Despite this, the old residential center has survived, and recent locally initiated efforts to up grade the area suggest a vitality worth preserving and strengthening.

Although there is a relatively high proportion of old and poorly maintained properties, there is, on the other hand, a significant number of new or recently built structures mixed with the old.

The residential areas, historically related to the once flourishing railroad stations, contain a number of long established public facilities. Included are two public elementary schools, public library, parks and playgrounds, post office, fire station, churches, and social clubs.

A new school is to be built within this section replacing old School #9. Furthermore, the Boynton Heights Civic Association and Woodbridge Estates Civic Association are made up of members from throughout the Port Reading area. Woodbridge Village, a new 75 home subdivision, is nearing completion in the northern part of the area. These facts seem to outweigh the detrimental influences and indicate a strong residential potential.

Being situated somewhat remote from the rest of the Township, this part appears to be oriented more closely to the neighboring residential and commercial area of Carteret Borough.

Sewaren:—This neighborhood encompasses an area of approximately 1.2 square miles and contains about 2,200 people. It is an elongated area on the eastern side of the Township along a slight ridgeland parallel to Arthur Kill, where widely scattered, generally old residential development is encroached upon by heavy industrial plants and oil storage tanks. It is isolated from the main body of the Township by the Woodbridge River and the New Jersey Turnpike, and is hemmed in by Smith's Creek, the Jersey Central Railroad, and salt marsh. A large amount of flat, relatively open land is still available for development.

Similar to Port Reading in many respects, this part is influenced by some of the same factors. The New Jersey Turnpike, the generating station, extensive industrial installations, railroads, sewage treatment plant, swamp, and numerous run-down boat docks along Smith's Creek and Arthur Kill all detract from the livability of the area. The lack of good physical integration with the rest of the Township causes this section to relate more closely to Perth Amboy.

Many of the same public facilities mentioned above are also present in Sewaren including, among others, a public school, post office, library, and churches.

Hopelawn:—This part is about 0.4 square miles in area and contains approximately 2,300 people. Once closely associated with the adjacent areas of both Fords and the City of Perth Amboy, Hopelawn now appears to be oriented primarily toward Perth Amboy as a result of the construction of new Route 9, and the Garden State Parkway. This area has a relatively high density of population and is bounded on two sides by the Lehigh Valley Railroad and Route 440.

This is a small area containing primarily old, rather high-density single-family houses with a significant percentage of deterioration and dilapidation.

Hopelawn is truly isolated from the remainder of the Township; however it contains most of the necessary facilities such as parks, playgrounds, library, etc. The main problems are similar to those in other parts of the Township, namely, poorly maintained roads, old run-down housing, strip commercialization (along New Brunswick Avenue) and lack of convenient access routes to the remainder of the Township.

Keasbey:—The southernmost part of the Township, Keasbey encompasses an area of about 2.4 square miles and contains approximately 1,200 people. It has become increasingly industrialized and now presents a wasteland character with large, open clay pit excavations, reclaimed salt marsh, smoke and odor-producing chemical and processing plants, isolated clusters of badly deteriorated housing, and high-level expressway bridges over the Raritan River.

This part possesses an influence which extends far beyond the physical boundaries of the area and strongly affects the character of adjacent Hopelawn and Fords and even bears upon the nature of the entire Township.

The major problems relate more to large-scale development decisions than to individual problems. Much of the land is vacant and low-lying. This, along with the construction of the Parkway and Route 9 (supported on tall concrete piers through Keasbey), leaves the section devoid of nearly all desirable residential factors.

Except for an elementary school and a post office, few other facilities are available. The housing is limited generally to four isolated clusters and is unquestionably the most seriously affected area in the Township. A half-mile wide excavation, abandoned for mining purposes some ten years ago, separates several of these clusters. Currently, the area is used by a private firm for the disposal of industrial wastes. Although New Jersey State law prohibits open dumps, this is in effect what it is. The waste material occasionally catches fire creating a nuisance and health hazard to the nearby residences.

Avenel:—This neighborhood covers an area of approximately 2.4 square miles and contains approximately 9,800 people. It is a sprawling, indefinite portion of the Township between Woodbridge Center, Colonia and Iselin, and the City of Rahway. The present character is principally one of strip commercial highway development along St. Georges Avenue and U. S. Route 1. The intersection of Avenel Street and the Pennsylvania Railroad, once the hub of activity, is no longer the center.

A number of industries, such as Food Concentrates, Inc. and Metal and Thermit Corp., have recently located around the relatively undeveloped edges. This area is clearly the most dispersed in the Township. It is difficult to define a center of activity for it is crossed or bounded by five heavily traveled highways, none of which have limited access. U. S. Route 1 is lined on both sides with generally obsolete and run-down strip commercial uses for nearly its entire length. To a lesser degree, the same is true of St. Georges Avenue, Avenel Street, Rahway Avenue and Amboy Avenue. The low level of design and maintenance of most of this commercial strip has a negative influence on the residential character of the area. Although this section contains public facilities such as schools, churches, library, post office, etc., the area as a whole has a high degree of poorly maintained structures. A sizeable area to the north is in State ownership and includes the Prison Farm and the site for a future State school and hospital for retarded children. The area to the west of the prison farm is devoted largely to scattered industrial uses and to the storage of scrap metal and junked automobiles.

U. S. Route 1 has recently been reconstructed with concrete barriers being added along the center line. This eliminates nearly all of the access points across the highway and limits still further the circulation from one part to the other.

Fords:—This neighborhood encompasses about 1.0 square miles and contains approximately 8,300 persons. It has a relatively high density of population and is made up primarily of commercial development along New Brunswick Avenue, the main highway between Perth Amboy and Metuchen, and a residential area to the north, much of which is post-World War II tract-type subdivisions extending to the Parkway and Turnpike. The section is almost completely built up with only a few scattered patches of vacant land.

As the major population and commercial center in the southern part of the Township, Fords contains numerous well-established public facilities including three schools, post office, library, fire station, churches, clubs and civic improvement associations.

Rapid residential development in some parts of the area has put pressure on existing school facilities and construction of additional schools or even classrooms is limited due to the few remaining open areas.

The poorer housing is located generally between the Lehigh Valley Railroad and New Brunswick Avenue. This is due in part to the influence of these two transportation arteries and to the industrial area to the south. Some scattered deterioration stems from the abandonment of old farm homesteads within new housing developments.

Three heavily traveled roads pass through the neighborhood: Main Street, King George Post Road, and New Brunswick Avenue.

The commercial area is one of the healthiest in the Township despite the general run-down condition of the buildings. The compactness and high population density of the area and the numerous access streets within the section undoubtedly account for much of this vitality.

North Fords:—This area of the Township, lying west of Woodbridge center, extends over approximately 2.8 square miles and contains about 8,000 people. It contains some of the newest, most densely developed residential land and at the same time has a high amount of open vacant land.

It consists of three distinctly different parts, each with its own problems and characteristics of landscape, development, utilization, and potential. The parts are:

a) a sub-area lying east of the Garden State Parkway between the Reading Railroad and U. S. Route 9, consisting of vacant land, clay pits now seldom worked or abandoned, two cemeteries, and a small residential area near the intersection of the Parkway and the New Jersey Turnpike. The main problem is the determination of how the vacant land should be developed. The proximity of four major highways gives this sub-area a key position in the Township and is perhaps the one undeveloped part of the Township that the municipal officials should be most interested in.

b) a sub-area west of the Parkway between the Reading Railroad and the New Jersey Turnpike consisting predominantly of post-war subdivision housing. U. S. Route 1 bisects this sub-area with only Ford Avenue connecting the two segments. Otherwise, this part is cut off from the rest of the Township. Within this sub-area are two elementary schools and one junior high. No other public facilities are conveniently available to the nearly 8,000 residents. Most of the commercial property is situated adjacent to U. S. Route 1.

c) a sub-area west of the Parkway between the Pennsylvania Railroad and the Reading Railroad. It includes the vacant "Free School Lands" and a few industries near the Middlesex-Essex Turnpike. Here again the problem is to determine how best to use the large expanse of vacant land once it becomes available for development.

Colonia:—Colonia comprises an area of about 3.1 square miles and contains approximately 14,500 people. It represents, generally, the highest quality residential area in the Township and has two separate characters: large estates, and good quality new homes in subdivision developments. This part, clearly the best of the Township, is gradually being encroached upon by housing of a denser type. It is a neighborhood without a center as such. It is the part of the Township most unlike any other. It is visually the most attractive, with generally high standards of development in terms of streets, housing placement, park and open space, and property maintenance. Most of the necessary public facilities are contained within the section including schools, parks, library, churches, civic clubs, etc.

Commercial development has been limited primarily to the intersection of Inman Avenue and Amherst Avenue; however, it is beginning to take the form of strip development, and at least one of the store groups lacks adequate parking space and the others have poorly planned parking facilities.

Northeast:—This part covers an area of about 2.2 square miles and contains approximately 1,400 people. It consists of an old residential area, bordering Avenel, new research and light industrial plants along Rahway Avenue, a large, sparsely developed subdivision, a sizeable area of swampland, a wide band of undeveloped, partially wooded land adjacent to the Township boundary and the Raritan arsenal in Carteret, and a small amount of Rahway River frontage. It is an expanse of undeveloped land bisected by two stream beds and with highly limited existing access to the remainder of the Township. The most significant recent changes in the area have been the construction of several industrial buildings.

This basically undeveloped section contains only a few scattered residences. It is made up primarily of low, flat, partially wooded land. Within the section is a junk yard, golf driving range, trailer park and some additional commercial uses along Rahway Avenue.

None of the previously discussed public facilities are located here. The residential area is generally considered part of Avenel.

Woodbridge Center:—This part is the most clearly definable of the Township. It encompasses an area of about 3.0 square miles and contains approximately 15,400 people. The central business core is surrounded by a significant number of multi-family residences, all within an outer area of predominantly single-family houses. This relatively compact area contains a large number of those more attractive and positive elements of the community; parklands, institutions, tree-lined and well-maintained residential streets, and public buildings and facilities. This section possesses the most urban characteristics of the Township and contains a relatively high population density and the smallest proportion of owner occupied dwellings. Yet, the relatively low vacancy ratio in this area of renter-occupied dwellings is probably attributable to the continuing attractiveness of the location, shopping facilities, and other less tangible values. It is perhaps also a measure of the desirability and demand in the Township for multi-family housing.

The most intensive commercial area is that part of Main Street between Amboy Avenue and Woodbridge Avenue. Parts of Route 9, Amboy Avenue and Rahway Avenue have developed into strip commercial development.

Woodbridge center, the historic center of the entire Township, contains the most public facilities of any part. The municipal building is located at the end of Main Street. Also included is the high school, a junior high school, an elementary school, post office, library, fire station, numerous churches, clubs, parks and playgrounds and the Board of Education administrative offices.

At one time, Main Street held a most important place in the Township. Now with the construction of several shopping centers in the vicinity, it has lost much of its vitality. This is reflected in the increasing number of vacant stores. Main Street is also used as a truck route between the industries in Port Reading and Sewaren and U. S. Route 1.

The quality of residential construction varies throughout the area. However, the commercial part of Main Street itself and the adjacent area to the southeast contains a relatively high percentage of deterioration.

Iselin:—The Iselin neighborhood of Woodbridge consists of an area of about 3.2 square miles and contains approximately 15,600 people. It is primarily a residential area of smaller, older houses. It is also the principal shopping and neighborhood center of the northwestern quadrant of the Township. Iselin appears to be oriented strongly toward the adjacent residential area of Colonia and toward the nearby City of Rahway. Commercial activity centered originally around the intersection of the Lincoln Highway and Green Street. Now it has spread out along Green Street. A new shopping center has recently been constructed on Oak Tree Road west of the Parkway, thus shifting the center of business activity.

The section contains numerous public facilities including schools, post office, library, parks and playgrounds, churches, clubs, etc. Passenger rail service to New York and Philadelphia is available on the Pennsylvania Railroad. The neighborhood is one of the older ones and includes local civic associations.

The older housing is becoming increasingly run-down. The density of housing varies but in general it is higher than Colonia, to the north. A high percentage of the streets in this section are in need of repair.

Physical Problems

The drawing, "Environmental Factors," indicates the major physical elements in Woodbridge that have either a positive or negative influence on development. In addition to these, several conditions and problems present in the Township are of primary importance in analyzing the over-all physical structure and condition of Woodbridge.

Condition of Housing: A significant problem in the Township is the extent of run-down housing. Deterioration is generally distributed throughout the various neighborhoods. The housing problem appears to result from a combination of factors: low standards of original construction; lack of proper maintenance as dwellings increase in age; overbuilding of the land with extremely high density of single-family housing on small lots with critically narrow sideyards; proximity in many areas of undesirable environmental factors, such as abandoned excavation areas, heavy industrial factories, stream and air pollution, and the resulting effect of these conditions on the community and property owner attitudes and values.

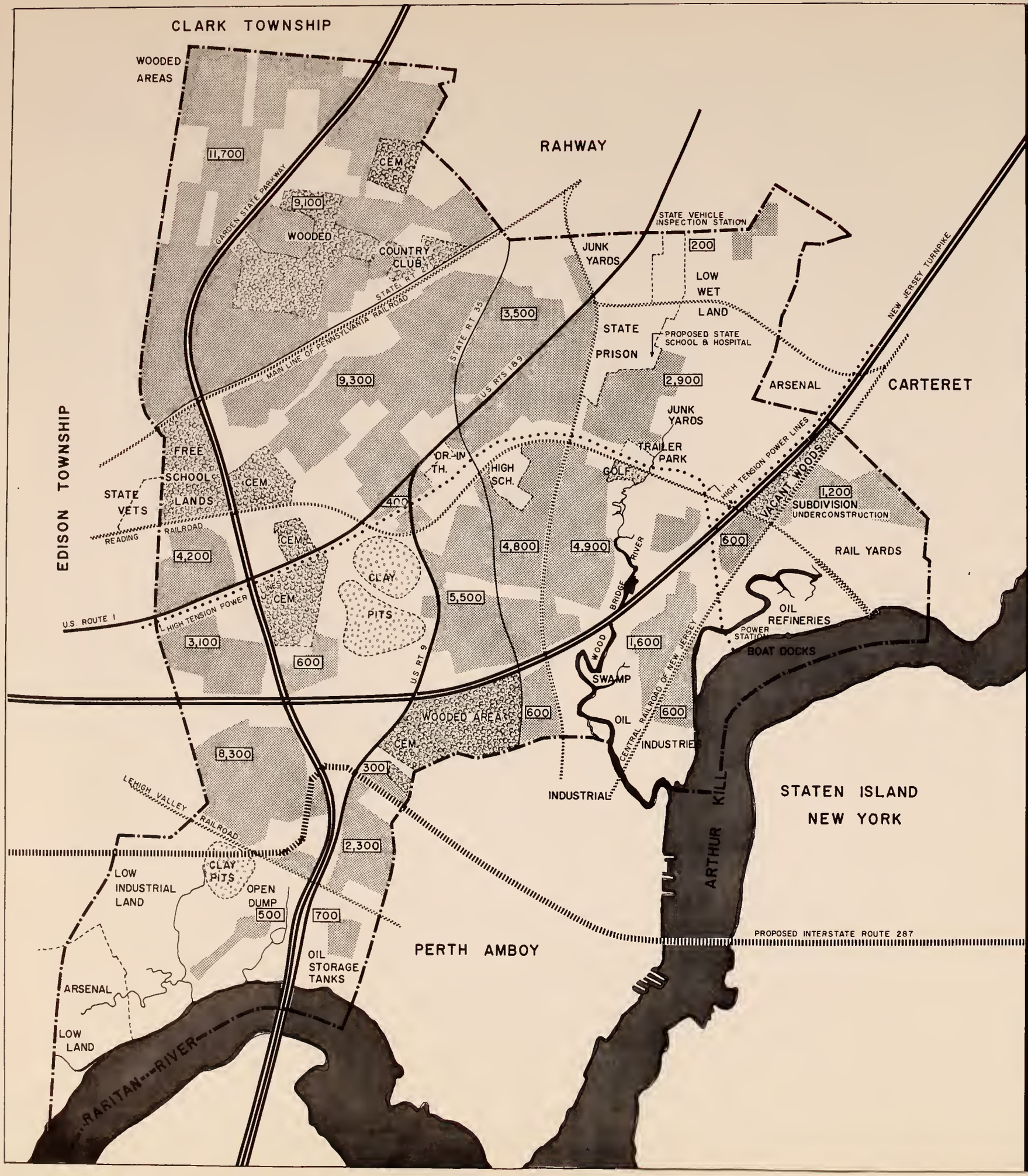
Density of Residential Developments:—A present problem and one that will increase in the future is the pattern of housing construction in most of the subdivisions constructed between World War II and the 1960 adoption of a more effective zoning ordinance. The conglomeration of row upon row of "look-alike" houses crowded together on a landscape which was formerly open rolling meadow, places a premium upon the remaining space available for development. The existence of these poorly planned, extremely dense subdivisions, characterized by poor construction and monotonous appearance is significant to the future of the Township and to the urban renewal program and it shows the need for better codes and more effective code enforcement.

Township Vehicular Circulation:—The most general Township-wide problem is the lack of a well organized and effectively designed local service road system. Moreover, with expressways slicing through the community in two directions, the opportunity for redesigning this system to better integrate the several somewhat isolated Township sections is seriously impeded. The present road system falls far short of providing modern vehicular circulation required by the present urban structure.

Construction Standards of Roads and Streets:—The most obvious problem in the Township is the generally poor condition of streets, sidewalks, and storm drainage facilities. Throughout the Township, roads are narrow, in many places unpaved and full of cracks and holes. Sidewalks are non-continuous and often unrelated to pedestrian lines of movement, and storm drainage facilities are either non-existent or insufficient. This is due in part to the lack of adequate codes and subdivision regulations and in part to the problem of inspection and enforcement during a period of rapid township development.

Strip Commercialization of Arterial Highways:—The construction of numerous stores, gas stations, salesrooms, motels, golf driving ranges, drive-in movies, and small industrial buildings along the main highways of the Township has resulted in a chaotic mixture of uses which detracts from the appearance of the entire Township.

Decline of the Central Business Area:—The impact of a new urban structure, of rapidly expanding residential suburbs serviced by widely spaced regional shopping centers, has effected a marked decline in the vitality of the Township business commercial facilities. Nowhere, however, has this force been more strongly felt than in Woodbridge Center. Many stores, shops, and accessory businesses along Main Street have become vacant or neglected. This is largely due to the commercial center's failure to adjust to the changing demands of a suburban shopping population. The result has left this once vital and healthy center of the Township in a competitively depressed condition. This situation is of direct concern in the formulation of objectives for a future Woodbridge.



ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

LEGEND

1,000 APPROXIMATE POPULATION

BUILT-UP AREA

0 2000 4000 1 MILE 8000
SCALE IN FEET

NORTH

COMMUNITY RENEWAL PROGRAM

WOODBRIDGE, N.J.

WOODBRIDGE REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY

VICTOR GRUEN ASSOCIATES
ARCHITECTURE · ENGINEERING · PLANNING

Chapter IV – GOVERNMENTAL STRUCTURE, CODES AND ACTIVITIES

Governmental Structure

In the period that urban renewal has emerged as an important function of government, many different methods of administering the program have been used by localities throughout the country. These different methods are a reflection of varying circumstances, including the size and financial capacity of the communities, the requirements of the State enabling legislation, prior experience with Federally-assisted public housing, political attitudes, and finally, the skill and energies of the local officials responsible for the program. The methods range from single individuals operating out of the office of the chief executive of the locality to the inclusion of the urban renewal activities in large-scale agencies charged with broad responsibilities for all aspects of community development.

Much debate has been directed to the questions of organizing localities for an effective renewal effort. The specific questions discussed include: What functions belong where? When are separate agencies needed? What are the inter-relationships of planning, code enforcement officers, public housing elements, and industrial commissions? How is coordination effected between local needs on the one hand and Federal and State Highway programs on the other?

Involved in the debate are planners, architects, political scientists, students of public administration, mayors, city managers, and the general public. Increased interest, expanded programs, and the desire of many cities to "get things done" have caused considerable attention to be directed to the appropriateness of local administrative structures. Baltimore pioneered toward the goal of more efficient and rapid implementation of urban renewal programs in 1956 when it centralized all components of the renewal process in a single agency. Since then, Cleveland, New York, and Cincinnati have completed programs of administrative reorganization, and Milwaukee and another half-dozen or so major cities are about to do likewise. Analysis of the formal structure of the community must be tempered by considering the qualities of the key individuals. Qualified people can make even the weakest structure function effectively, while incompetents can reduce a carefully developed organization to chaos.

New Jersey, with its fifty-three cities, 235 townships, 257 boroughs, twenty-one towns, and two villages, has been described as a political science laboratory. Unlike most states, all land in New Jersey is incorporated. Labels, however, are confusing. A township, for example, may be many times larger than a city, and it is politically equal to its neighbors whether they be cities, boroughs, towns, or villages. To complicate matters further, several townships call themselves villages.

In 1950, the State passed the Optional Municipal Charter Law. This law, commonly known as the Faulkner Act, provides individual municipalities with a framework for charter revisions including a plan of optional charters which can be adopted. Offered in this plan are six variations of the Mayor-Council form of government, five variations of the Council-Manager form, including one specifically designed for communities under 150,000, and four variations of a form for small municipalities under 12,000.

Numerous municipalities in New Jersey have made use of this invaluable tool over the last decade. The most noteworthy is probably that of Newark, which, in 1954, abandoned its old commission government and in its place set up its present Mayor-Council system.

The Municipality

Woodbridge was chartered in 1669 and the original form of government has survived to the present day. A change to the commission form was proposed in 1919, however; the proposal was put to a vote in March of that year and was defeated.

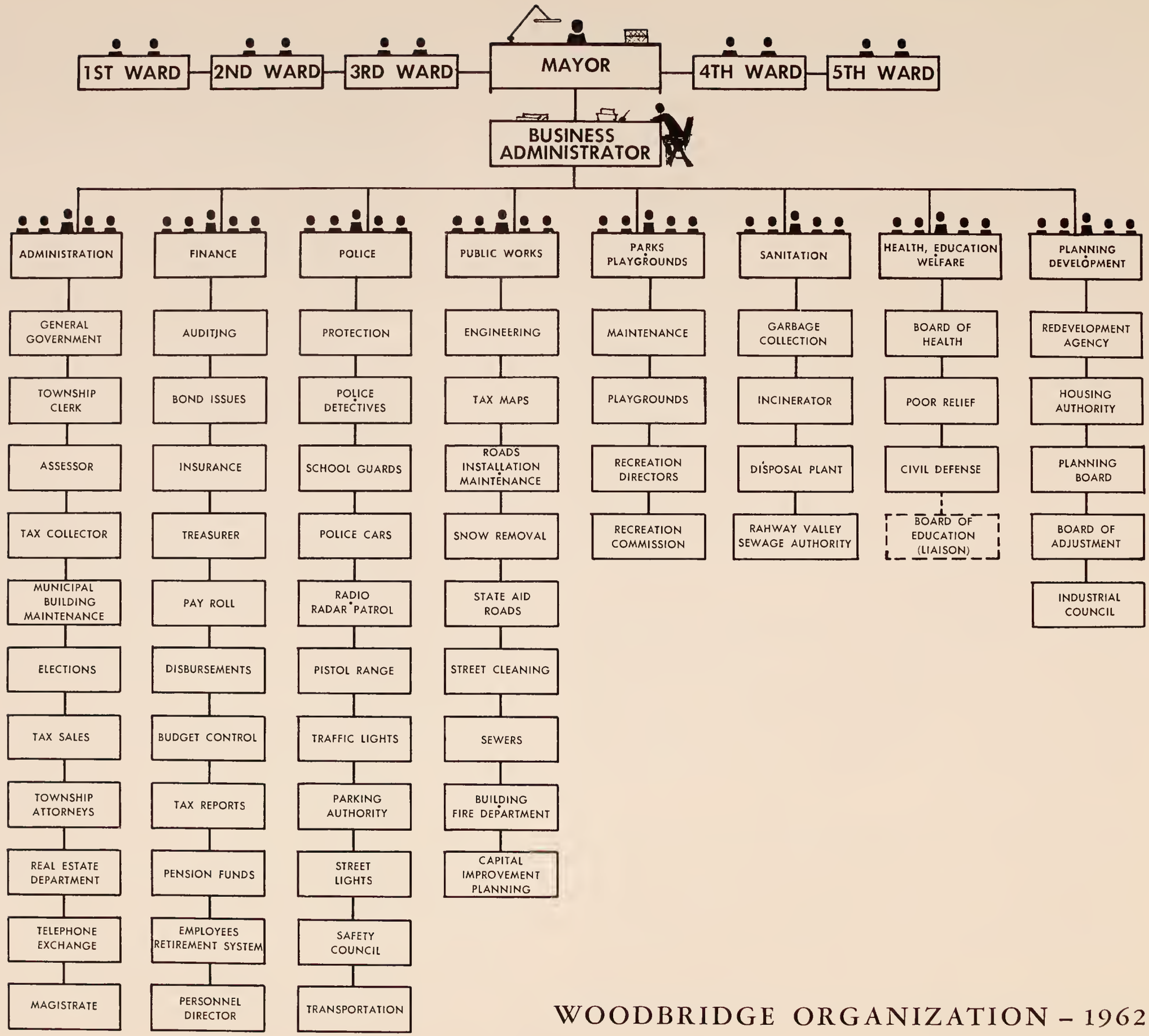
Of the three major forms of government presently in use, Mayor-Council, Commission, and Council-Manager, more than half of the municipalities in the country use the Mayor-Council. The Council-Manager form seems to be most popular in medium sized cities of between 100,000 and 500,000, and the once popular Commission government has lost importance in recent years as more and more municipalities have abandoned it in favor of the generally more effective government featuring a strong chief executive.

Woodbridge presently uses a variation of the first, or Mayor-Council government. As set up here, the Mayor is elected directly by the people for a term of two years. He has voting but not veto power. In addition to the Mayor, a total of ten Councilmen are elected, two from each of the five wards. Each is elected for a term of two years, and none are elected at large.

It must be noted that in Woodbridge, the Councilmen are called Committeemen and instead of Council meetings, the Township holds Committee meetings. These terms should not cause the Woodbridge type of government to be confused with that of the Commission form. This is additionally confusing as County Committeemen and County Committeewomen also appear on Primary Day ballots.

The organization chart illustrates the executive and legislative parts of the government. The executive responsibility is shared among eight committees: Administration; Finance; Police; Public Works; Parks and Playgrounds; Sanitation; Health, Education and Welfare; and Planning and Development. Each committee is composed of five of the ten elected Committeemen (Councilmen). One of the five is appointed Chairman of the Committee and generally a Committeeman serves as Chairman of no more than one department committee at a time.

Within these eight committees are more than sixty various agencies and positions that enable the Township to function. Nearly all play some part in the physical development of the Township; however, those responsible for the establishment and enforcement of the various codes and ordinances regulating land and buildings are of major importance here.



WOODBRIDGE ORGANIZATION – 1962

Of particular importance in the entire organization set-up is the position of Business Administrator. This person is the vital link between the Mayor and the various committees. It is his responsibility to coordinate the activities of each committee so that the government functions in an orderly and balanced manner.

Agencies

Board of Adjustment (Zoning Board)—The first zoning Board was appointed in 1929. It was composed of seven members and was organized to develop a zoning ordinance for the Township. Two years later the first zoning ordinance was adopted.

The Board is presently composed of five members, each appointed for a term of five years and operates with one part-time secretary. The Board holds weekly meetings and is authorized to (1) hear and decide appeals alleging error in the enforcement of the zoning ordinance; (2) hear and decide requests for special exceptions from provisions of the ordinance or interpretation of the map; (3) hear and decide appeals from property owners alleging exceptional or undue hardship because of exceptionally narrow, shallow, or odd-shaped parcels of land; and (4) recommend to the governing body the granting of variances permitting specific structures or uses in districts restricted against such structures or uses.

The Planning Board—This agency was created in 1954. It is made up of nine members. Six are appointed for a term of six years each. The Mayor serves for his term of office. One Municipal Official serves a one-year term and one Committeeman serves his term of office. The Board operates with no staff and only one part-time secretary.

Responsibility of this Board includes adoption of subdivision regulations and review of new subdivision plats to see whether they meet the standards set forth in the subdivision regulations. After review, the plat is sent with recommendations to the governing body for action. The subdivision ordinance, also adopted originally in 1954, is discussed at a later point in this report. The Planning Board is also responsible for the development and updating of the Township Master Plan Studies and it was under the Board's guidance that the first Township Master Plan Studies were adopted in 1960. An outgrowth of that report is a Capital Improvements Study under preparation.

Building Department—This agency, through its acting Building Inspector and four Assistant Building Inspectors, is responsible for enforcing the zoning ordinance, building code, part of the housing code and fire code.

Under past practices, inspections of property were conducted only after a complaint had been made. However, a system of periodic inspections in conjunction with inspections required by the Board of Health and Redevelopment Agency has been developed and is currently in use.

The Acting Building Inspector is also Director of Real Estate for Township Property, Soil Removal Inspector for the Soil Removal Ordinance, and Director of Fire Inspections.

Redevelopment Agency—The Woodbridge Redevelopment Agency was created in 1960 as the sole authority for urban renewal activities in the Township. It is composed of five commissioners appointed by the Township Committee, and one member appointed by the New Jersey State Department of Conservation and Economic Development, who serve without monetary compensation. Heading the agency is an Executive Committee composed of a Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Treasurer. The Executive Director serves as secretary.

The first major activity undertaken by this body was the Federally-assisted Community Renewal Program which is the subject of this report. It has submitted to the Urban Renewal Administration the Survey and Planning Application for Project Bowtie, the Township's first urban renewal project. It has also been instrumental in awakening interest in the problems and opportunities for community growth and in developing coordination among the various municipal agencies.

As early as 1888, Woodbridge had a civic improvement organization. Now it has approximately fifty, made up of local citizens interested in good government and established with the goal of improving Woodbridge. The Redevelopment Agency is now engaged in a program of informing these groups of the various renewal activities and of enlisting their support.

Board of Health—This agency employs one inspector, three inspectors 1st class, five registered nurses and six clerks. It operates a series of clinics and health stations. In addition, the Agency is responsible for enforcing the health code, part of the housing code, plumbing code, and the miscellaneous other codes and ordinances dealing with weed control, boarding homes, swimming pools, public nuisances, smoke control, air pollution, and mosquito control.

A new inspection form has been devised for closer coordination and more effective enforcement of the several codes and ordinances relating to building and land development.

Other functions of this Agency include the licensing and control of dogs and the employment of dog wardens.

Housing Authority—This agency is composed of six members with each serving for a term of five years. Five are appointed by the Township Committee and one by the State.

The Housing Authority is responsible for supervising the construction, maintenance, and operation of public housing in the Township. To carry out these duties, an Executive Director, a secretary, bookkeeper, and two maintenance men are employed.

Activities of the Agency include the operation of a 17-building (150 unit) public housing project located on Bunn's Lane, Woodbridge, adjacent to the New Jersey Turnpike. In addition, a 60 unit project for housing the elderly has been approved. It is to be located on James Street and construction is to start by the middle of 1962.

Industrial Council—Under the 1962 reorganization of the Township, the Industrial Council is to be made up of seven members each appointed by the Township Committee. The members are to be industrial and professional leaders of the Township. The Agency is to carry on and expand the program of the previous Industrial Commissioner. This consists basically of a program to encourage industrial expansion and development within the Township.

The Charter Study

On November 7, 1961, voters elected a Commission of five persons to study the Township government under the present charter. This study is to be completed near the end of 1962 and at that time a recommendation can be made concerning reorganization of the government.

Since this recommendation may involve wide-spread changes in the present organization, the final decision will be of great importance not only for the Urban Renewal Program, but for all Township activities. In any event, proposed changes will be submitted to the electorate; therefore, it is important that each citizen become completely informed of the activities of the Charter Study Commission. In the last ten years, more than thirty New Jersey municipalities have decided to amend their charters. The experience of these communities along with others that are presently considering a similar move, will be very useful in the study in Woodbridge.

Review of Codes and Regulations

Two municipal codes are receiving increased attention as the urban renewal process evolves. The rigid enforcement of good housing codes and building codes is now accepted as an important function of local government. There is often confusion as to the purpose of each. Briefly, the housing code provides a set of uniform standards for governing the condition, occupancy and maintenance of residential premises. It establishes reasonable safeguards for the safety, health and welfare of the occupants and owners, and fixes certain responsibilities and duties of owners, operators, agents and occupants of any structure containing dwelling units.

On the other hand, the building code relates directly to the structure, whether it is residential or not, and governs the methods of construction and quality of material.

Building Code—The first Township building code was adopted at about the end of the first World War. A second replaced this in 1935. Presently in effect is one commonly referred to as the BOCA code. It is officially titled Basic Building Code and was published originally in 1950 by the Building Officials Conference of America. The second edition (published in 1955) is the one used in Woodbridge. Including the subsequent amendments, the code is lengthy and comprehensive in scope, with provisions covering many facets of material and construction.

It is a performance type code as opposed to a specification type code. This means simply that instead of "specifying" certain materials—4" brick for instance—the required standards are spelled out in terms of "performance". That is, a material is judged on its ability to withstand heat, retard the spread of fire, etc. rather than on its type.

The code is heavily oriented to commercial and industrial type structures. Therefore, it is often overly complex for the construction of one and two-family dwellings which make up the bulk of construction in Woodbridge.

Housing Code—Woodbridge adopted its housing code in February 1960. The provisions were drawn up locally and cover eleven basic areas: (1) Definitions, (2) Inspection procedure, (3) Enforcing procedure, (4) Minimum Standards for basic equipment and facilities, (5) Minimum Standards for light, ventilation, and heating, (6) Maintenance of dwellings, (7) Minimum Standards for location, space, and use, (8) Requirements for owners and occupants, (9) Rooming Houses, (10) Procedure for designation and condemnation of dwellings, (11) Penalties.

Although the code is not a "model code", the provisions are common ones found in numerous codes. Although it lacks thoroughness and detail, it has all the elements of a good code. The major weakness is in the lack of adequate property maintenance requirements. This is especially true of the open areas around dwellings and the exterior of the dwellings themselves.

Additional codes in effect in Woodbridge are as follows:

Smoke Control (State of New Jersey Code).

Swimming Pool.

Noise and Vibration.

Public Health Nuisance.

Fire Prevention (National Board of Fire Underwriters).

Weed Control.

Boarding Homes.

Air Pollution.

Mosquito Control.

There is no local electrical code, and approval of electrical installations is left to inspectors from the Fire Underwriters' office. Presently, the plumbing code is incorporated in the health code and is enforced by the Board of Health.

In addition to the above, three other documents are of special significance in this renewal study: The Master Plan Studies published in 1959, the Zoning Ordinance, and the Subdivision Regulations. A discussion of each follows:

Review of Master Plan Studies

The Master Plan Studies prepared in 1959 for the Township are a collection of basic studies upon which is based a preliminary land use plan, called the "Suggested Development Plan". The nine-section, 116 page report includes, among other things, discussions on natural features, land use, population, traffic, public facilities and services, recreation, schools, municipal finance and budget, plan description and effectuation. Recommendations are limited and tentative, with some being of a general non-directive nature. However, most of the conclusions and objectives of the plan seem well-reasoned and sound. The most important objectives stated are:

1. To establish appropriate areas near the center of Woodbridge, Fords, and Iselin for multi-family dwellings and garden apartments to satisfy the needs of the age groups particular to this area;
2. To revitalize Woodbridge Center by the unification and integration of park, government, and civic buildings and shopping facilities into a focal center for the entire Township;
3. To classify streets and highways, relating each to its particular purpose and volume of traffic;
4. To set aside park and conservation areas along the stream beds with portions to be maintained as pedestrian ways;
5. To construct new elementary schools at Avenel, Colonia, Port Reading, Woodbridge Center, and Iselin, along with new junior high schools at Avenel and Iselin and additional high school facilities within the Township;
6. To increase recreation areas and facilities by over 700 acres;
7. To increase the proportion of one-bedroom multi-family dwellings in order to offset the high Township costs which have arisen from the influx of single-family homes during the decade;
8. To place the remaining vacant land in the most appropriate use to aid in balancing the Township's tax base;
9. To increase the police force to include a total of between 120 and 149 men; and
10. To add two fire districts.

Obviously some of the foregoing objectives are of greater significance than others. Had emphasis been placed on the more significant ones, clearer and more pronounced goals for the community would have been established permitting community consensus in regard to the more important objectives.

Land Use Plan. Despite a weak statistical base, the suggested uses in the plan appear to be reasonable. The fact that the land use pattern is well established throughout most of the Township strongly influences the future use of much of the vacant land. For instance, it would be unwise to introduce most non-residential uses into areas already firmly established as residential.

The reason given for wishing to introduce multi-family dwellings into the community is an effort to offset the present high costs attributed to the influx of single-family homes in the past decade. It must be borne in mind that merely proposing and zoning large tracts of land for a certain use will not guarantee that use.

An unusually high proportion of land is proposed for industrial use; the percentage is nearly 50 percent of the total township area. Most of this is low land adjacent to tidal water and is clearly best suited for this use.

It must be recognized that the concept of zoning for industry to balance the tax base is followed by many communities. Therefore, each local government with its individual taxing power is in a position of competition with all the others to attract the desired "high rateables". The present emphasis on the local property tax in New Jersey adds additional pressure to balance the budget by manipulating the various land uses.

Thoroughfare Plan — The Master Plan Studies set forth the following system of street classification:

Major	— primarily used for fast and regional through traffic such as U.S. Routes 1 and 9 and N. J. Routes 27 and 35.
Secondary	— used for over-all circulation within the Township and also to provide necessary access to the major street system.
Collector	— provide circulation within residential areas to the secondary streets.
Minor	— provides principal access to individual residential properties.
Marginal Access	— parallel to Major Routes and designed to limit and control direct access to them.

This system is a fairly standard one and is adequate for Woodbridge. The Suggested Development Plan classifies and depicts the first two categories: major and secondary. The marginal access streets are fairly obvious as they, for the most part, parallel the Garden State Parkway and New Jersey Turnpike. The remaining streets would be considered either collector or minor streets.

The recommended street standards are directly related to the classification system, and both should be used in reviewing new subdivision plats. The Development Plan proposes the addition of about 4.5 miles of new secondary streets. These would connect existing secondary streets and would facilitate the movement of traffic within each section of the Township. The ones proposed appear to be supported by the analysis of traffic circulation.

Community Facilities Plan — This part of the report is devoted primarily to an inventory and analysis of the existing areas of the Township that are served by public water and sewer. The statistics failed to provide any strong recommendations for improving and extending service. Suggestions were limited to general statements regarding additional demand for service from new developments. Relating this background information to the thoroughfares plan, a plan for the improvement of and additions to the existing water system could be drawn.

The school and recreation proposals are based on nationally accepted standards. This is perhaps the most thoroughly covered part of the study, and extensive information is presented.

An analysis of police and fire protection is one that is often overlooked in a plan, and it is a useful addition. Along this same line, a brief survey of hospital and clinic facilities available in or near the Township would have been desirable.

Public Improvements Program — The 1959 studies did not include a public improvements program; however, the Township Engineer is presently preparing such a program, based on the needs outlined therein.

Probably the major areas of study not covered in the planning studies are those of economics and neighborhood analysis. An economic study of the locality and surrounding region is an essential ingredient of a planning study such as this. The shopping habits, employment statistics, wage level, etc. are all points to be considered in deriving and recommending objectives and goals for Woodbridge.

The various neighborhoods are vital elements in the Township; however, no attempt was made to depict the difference in character of one from another. No mention is made of the generally poor condition of the local streets, a few being nearly impassable, or of poor storm drainage facilities. Sidewalks are almost non-existent in sizeable parts of the community, indicating the need for subdivision regulations with higher design requirements and better enforcement of the existing regulations.

Additional environmental factors could have been stated. The most important ones are: cemeteries, river industry, abandoned quarries, junk yards, low-lying marsh land, the effect of the many traffic routes through the Township, and finally, the roadside strip commercial that has developed along much of Highways 1, 9, and 35.

This plan was prepared in 1959, and since then changes in zoning and subdivision regulations have occurred. A capital improvement program is evidence of continued planning interest. In order that best results can be obtained from these efforts, it is essential that there be continual review of progress, and adjustment of specific proposals in the light of changing circumstances. This, the Woodbridge Redevelopment Agency intends to schedule.

Review of Subdivision Ordinance:

Woodbridge adopted its first subdivision ordinance in 1954. Since then, it has been extensively amended, correcting numerous deficiencies in the original ordinance. The result is a document printed in several parts with the second part nullifying much of the first. This means that the ordinance is confusing and extremely difficult to understand.

The administrative procedure established in the ordinance is adequate. However, a number of significant amendments were adopted on March 20, 1962. Several deal with fee changes and time limits. Of major importance is an addition to Article V. Under Section 2 of this Article, a procedure is set up for reviewing residential structures to be constructed in the Township. A design committee is established along with a set of general design standards. This procedure appears to be well studied; however, inasmuch as this ordinance is limited to the subdivision of land, that is, the design of streets, utilities, etc., it is felt that if the Township wishes to use this method of regulating the design of buildings, the proper place for this is in the zoning ordinance. It should be borne in mind that this method of regulation has not been widely used and is therefore of an experimental nature.

The required improvements in Article VII are common in most ordinances. However, street signs are usually contained in the list.

Article VIII, Design Standards, is particularly important as it establishes the design rules which the subdivider must observe in constructing the subdivision.

The right-of-way widths, recently amended, are now 80 feet for arterial streets and 60 feet for collector, minor, and marginal access streets. The original requirement of 50 feet for minor and marginal access streets was more in line with common practice.

There is disagreement as to how much information should be presented in the ordinance regarding actual detailed construction standards. The simple reference to standards as required by the Municipal Engineer is often used and this is adequate if these standards are high enough and are uniform throughout the Municipality.

The more effective ordinances generally go a step further and state at least the basic requirement, such as pavement width and surfacing, the width, surfacing and placement of sidewalks, the type and placement of street signs, etc.

Properly enforced, an ordinance requiring and clearly stating reasonably high standards of construction would have regulated development more consistently over the last decade. The higher restrictions would have undoubtedly discouraged some of the development and resulted in a lower Township growth rate. Furthermore, Woodbridge would not now face the prospects of rebuilding much of her recently constructed improvements.

ZONING

LEGEND

RESIDENTIAL

- R40 RESIDENCE ZONE
- R 10 RESIDENCE ZONE
- R7.5 RESIDENCE ZONE
- R6A RESIDENCE ZONE
- R 6 RESIDENCE ZONE
- R 5 RESIDENCE ZONE

BUSINESS

- NEIGHBORHOOD BUSINESS ZONE
- B2 CENTRAL BUSINESS ZONE
- B3 HIGHWAY BUSINESS ZONE

INDUSTRIAL

- M1 LIGHT INDUSTRY ZONE
- M2 HEAVY INDUSTRY ZONE

ZONING AS ADOPTED 1960

0 2000 4000 1 MILE 8000
SCALE IN FEET

NORTH

COMMUNITY RENEWAL PROGRAM

WOODBRIDGE, N.J.

WOODBRIDGE REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY

VICTOR GRUEN ASSOCIATES
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Review of Zoning Ordinance:

The current zoning ordinance was adopted in 1960 and amends in its entirety an earlier ordinance adopted originally in 1931. The text is clearly printed on standard 8-1/2 x 11 paper and consists of 29 articles or basic provisions. The 53-page booklet is well organized and easy to read. Also included with the booklet is a *schedule* of yard, area and building requirements. Separate from the booklet is the zoning map printed at a scale of 1 inch = 2000 feet.

Zoning Map — The scale of the zoning map is adequate to clearly show each district. The Township is divided into eleven districts altogether: 6 residential, 3 business, and 2 industry.

The present map shows marked changes from the one previously in use. The most obvious is the elimination of business along many of the streets and highways — a reflection of the recent Master Plan Studies and resultant Suggested Development Plan.

Table 8

Zoned Land Uses — November 1961

Use Category	*Area in Acres*	*Percent of Total Land Area*
Residential	6,900	49.0
Business	1,075	7.6
Neighborhood	125	0.9
Central	230	1.6
Highway	720	5.1
Industry	6,100	43.4
Light	2,300	16.2
Heavy	3,800	27.2
TOTAL	14,075	100.0

Residential development, especially in the western half of the Township, has all but used up the land presently zoned for such uses. The land use map indicates that industry has been confined largely to the eastern and southern edges of the Township. This locational aspect has undoubtedly been influenced by the fact that Perth Amboy is a heavily industrialized area and, as industry has spread outward, it has tended to locate along the waterfront and in proximity to railroad and highway transportation.

The zoning map indicates that an effort has been made to restrict and isolate industrial locations to those areas which are already partially developed for those purposes. In addition to the land reserved for heavy industrial uses in the eastern half of the Township, the zoning map indicates that regulations call for the development of light industrial areas running along the edges of the heavy industrial areas, thus creating somewhat of a buffer zone between the existing residential sections and the heavy industrial sections. This is even more apparent in the western half of the Township where a large portion of land lying between Colonia to the north and Fords to the south has been zoned for light industrial use. This light industrial zone also swings to the north-northeast paralleling the highway commercial developments along Route 1. Based on the present zoning map, it would appear that the Township might eventually develop into three isolated residential communities.

1. to the west-northwest in Colonia,
2. to the west-southwest in Fords, and
3. the original core of the Township including Woodbridge and parts of Avenel.

Amendments — The 1960 ordinance has been amended several times. District boundaries have been altered with one length of highway business being extended and others cut back. One arm of heavy industry has also been extended eliminating an equal amount of light industry, and a small section of light industry has been changed to residential. To date, two other amendments have been passed, but these merely involve lot ownership and administrative fees. In addition, an ORE (Office Research and Engineering) zone has been established.

Comprehensiveness — The ordinance covers the land use types that can be anticipated for an urban area such as Woodbridge. It establishes standards that are rather advanced and, properly enforced, they should encourage desirable and pleasant living conditions.

Preciseness of Wording — Important in any ordinance is a complete list of good definitions, for it is through the use of precise terms that effective zoning and planning controls are established. "Lot", for instance, may be defined in many different ways; but one must be singled out, understood, and used consistently throughout the zoning process.

There are some inconsistencies in the wording of the ordinance. An example of this is the use of both terms, sales area and gross floor area in discussing required parking. The first is used in the B-1 District requirements and the second is used in the B-3 District.

Ease of Interpretation — Conciseness and simplicity of language are perhaps two keys to quickly and clearly interpreting the ordinance. In this respect, the Woodbridge ordinance stands up well. The wording is for the most part clear and understandable.

Schedule — The schedule, nearly always included in newer and progressive ordinances, is perhaps the most important element in helping interpret the regulations. It simplifies usage by listing, on a single page, information otherwise contained in many pages. With this schedule, a person with only a casual understanding of what is contained in the ordinance can readily see the major requirements for each zoning district. The schedule presented in Article VI is really only a partial one. Much of the information contained in Articles VIII through XVIII is of equal importance and should be included in the same table. This would necessitate more space; however, all permitted uses in the R-5 Residence Zone, for instance, could be determined without paging through several sections.

Chapter V – FINANCIAL STRUCTURE

Local Tax Structure—State of New Jersey

The financial structure of all municipalities in the State of New Jersey is dependent to a large extent upon real property taxes. The structure lacks such major revenue sources as a general sales tax or personal income tax. Table 9 illustrates the revenue sources for all taxing districts in the State of New Jersey. The table indicates also that real property taxes have not only maintained a dominant position in the tax structure but are increasing as a share of the over-all total. In 1959, real property taxes represented 65.25% of total tax revenue as opposed to 64.5% in 1955. The 1959 figure represents a dollar increase of 44.8%. Thus, one sees the importance of real property taxes to the total financial structure.

The Woodbridge Tax Structure

Woodbridge Township derives its income from two main sources:

1. Revenue from property taxes, and
2. Revenue whose sources may be described as "general".

The major contributors in the latter group are gross receipt taxes, franchise taxes, state road aid and building permit fees.

The relationship of revenues derived from the above sources is shown in Table 10, "Summary Budget Statement, 1955-1961." The table indicates that the property tax total increased at a far greater rate than revenue from "general" sources.

With the exception of 1957 and 1959, general revenues experienced minimal increases. In the two years noted above, this combined tax source showed a decrease. On the other hand, total property taxes show steady and substantial increases. The table indicates that the proportion of total general appropriations supplied by property taxes has increased considerably between 1955 and 1961. In 1955, property taxes represented 20% of required general appropriations as opposed to 36% in 1961.

The primary reason for the increase in property taxes is the expenditure required to expand and build new school facilities to service a growing Township population. The lack of adequate Township facilities has forced local schools into double sessions. To alleviate this critical problem, the local school board received approval in the recent December 5, 1961 election to float a $4,500,000 bond issue for school construction.

Table 9

Sources for all Taxing Districts in the State of New Jersey

Calendar Years 1955-1959

Taxes for Local Purposes	*(thousands of dollars)*					*Per Cent Distribution*		*Per Cent Change*
	1955	*1956*	*1957*	*1958*	*1959*	*1955*	*1959*	*'55-'59*
Property	$533,934	$579,837	$645,567	$710,943	$773,123	64.5	65.2	44.8
Public Utility	47,743	51,845	57,167	61,590	66,431	5.8	5.6	39.1
Bank Stock	2,536	2,697	2,890	3,042	3,208	0.3	0.3	26.5
Sales Tax (Atlantic City)	1,547	1,585	1,644	1,567	1,797	0.2	0.2	16.2
Financial Business	643	657	820	798	750	.08	.06	16.6
Inheritance (5% County)	599	618	798	786	989	.07	.08	65.1
Poll Taxes	36	31	29	29	19	.004	.001	–47.2
TOTAL LOCAL TAXES	$587,038	$637,269	$708,915	$778,755	$846,317	71.00%	71.40%	44.2%

Table 10

Summary Budget Statement

Woodbridge Township

1955-1961

	1955	*1956*	*1957*	*1958*	*1959*	*1960*	*1961*
Municipal Purposes	$3,098,333	$3,537,426	$3,634,530	$3,965,330	$4,276,267	$4,687,723	$5,122,431
Reserve for Uncollected Taxes	255,087	300,186	328,017	420,125	520,671	518,554	552,752
Total General Appropriations	$3,353,420	$3,837,612	$3,962,547	$4,385,455	$4,796,938	$5,206,277	$5,675,183
Less: Anticipated Revenues other than Current Property Tax	2,688,274	2,914,804	2,881,445	3,058,739	3,028,782	3,436,239	3,658,682
Difference: Property Tax for Support of Municipal Budget Appropriations	$ 665,146	$ 922,808	$1,081,102	$1,326,716	$1,768,157	$1,770,038	$2,016,501
Percentage of Total General Appropriations Supplied by Property Tax	20%	24%	27%	30%	36%	34%	36%

Table 11, "Distribution of Woodbridge Local Taxes" presents a breakdown of the general tax rate (against each $100 of assessed valuation) into its three primary groupings: (a) Local purposes; (b) County, and (c) Local school. The distribution table indicates that the largest dollar increase occurred in the school category which, as pointed out above, was utilized to expand and construct new facilities. The small increase in the general tax rate for local purposes, amounting to $1.54 per $100 of assessed valuation during the seven-year period, 1955-1961, is primarily attributable to the increase in services required by the expanding population in the Township.

As the Township population continues to rise, it is apparent that additional services will be required. Since Woodbridge Township has no taxation means within its existing "general" structure capable of absorbing an appreciable increase in cash requirements as found necessary to provide additional services, it would appear that the property tax will continue to increase in future years.

For purposes of this analysis, the budget requirements through 1968 have been estimated on the basis of the dollar growth experienced between 1955 and 1961. This is shown in Table 12. It is estimated that in April 1968, the general appropriations figure will approximate $8,000,000. As the budget increases in the next seven years, an increasing proportion of the required general appropriations is expected to be supplemented by property tax. It is estimated that 45% of the total Township operating costs will be defrayed by property tax in 1968 as opposed to 36% at the present time.

Table 11

Summary Budget Statement

Distribution of Woodbridge Local Taxes[1]

	1955	*1956*	*1957*	*1958*	*1959*	*1960*	*1961*
Local Purposes	$ 1.64	$ 2.10	$ 2.27	$ 2.57	$ 3.24	$ 3.15	$ 3.18
County	2.12	2.51	2.36	2.44	2.74	3.24	3.36
Local School	6.43	6.69	7.12	9.09	10.69	11.36	11.24
	$10.19	$11.30	$11.75	$14.10	$16.67	$17.75	$17.78

[1]General tax rate per $100 of assessed value.

Table 12

Projected Summary Budget Statement

Woodbridge Township 1962-1968

(thousands of dollars)

	1962	*1963*	*1964*	*1965*	*1966*	*1967*	*1968*
Municipal Purposes	$5,400	$5,700	$6,000	$6,300	$6,600	$6,900	$7,100
Reserve for Uncollected Taxes	595	638	680	723	765	808	850
Total General Appropriations	$5,995	$6,338	$6,680	$7,023	$7,365	$7,708	$7,950
Less: Anticipated Revenues Other than Current Property Tax	3,756	3,853	3,950	4,047	4,144	4,241	4,338
Difference: Property Tax for Support of Municipal Budget Appropriations	$2,239	$2,485	$2,730	$2,976	$3,221	$3,461	$3,612
Percentage of Total General Appropriations Supplied by Property Tax	37%	39%	41%	42%	44%	45%	45%

County and Woodbridge Township Assessment

Table 13 shows assessment and equalization data for all taxing districts in Middlesex County. The total 1961 assessed value of land and improvements in Woodbridge Township was approximately $56,000,000, the highest in the County. Perth Amboy and Edison Township have approximately the same total assessed value—$55,000,000 and $54,000,000 respectively. The value above is based upon the assessed value as adjusted to the true value. As can be seen from the table, assessment ratios vary widely among taxing districts. These vast variations occur despite the fact that the New Jersey Constitution requires that all property be assessed for taxation under general laws and uniform rules.

As noted, in order to provide comparable data for all taxing districts in Middlesex County, an equalization factor is applied to the total assessed value. The equalization factor enables local taxing districts to adjust valuation of all taxable real estate to full value and thereby acts as a basis for measuring the local share of foundation school program costs and for the apportionment of county taxes among the lesser government entities. In no way does the equalization have an effect upon apportionment of the tax load among properties within a single district.

With application of the equalization factor, Woodbridge Township shows the highest real property value in the County. The other two taxing districts which are comparable in assessed value—Perth Amboy and Edison Township—are considerably below Woodbridge Township in aggregate true value.

Woodbridge Township's Borrowing Capacity

The pressures on the Township tax structure are reflected in the annual debt statement of the Township. Under state law, each municipality in the state must file an annual debt statement. It is against this debt statement that the borrowing position of the Township can be measured. By state law, any increase in the borrowing of a county or municipality is governed by the following limits:

> "No bond ordinance shall be finally adopted if it appears from the supplemental debt statement required by Chapter 2 that the percentage of net debt as stated therein will exceed 4%, in the case of a county, or 7% in the case of a municipality."

Thus, in the case of Woodbridge the 7% figure is a key one. Examination of the Woodbridge annual debt statement for 1960 and 1961 indicates that this percentage in 1960 was 24.47 and in 1961, was 29.91. Obviously these two figures far exceed the 7% maximum. It is understood that this exceeding of state statutory limitations is permitted because of the extreme financial hardships of the Township—these hardships arising principally from the school needs.

These examples of exceeding present statutory limitations underscore the pressures which have led to the presently contemplated revisions in state statutes covering local debt. Under the new proposals, it seems likely that Woodbridge will have a much larger borrowing capacity* but, as pointed out, this capacity will still be directed toward real property valuations within the Township.

* Recent proposal in State Legislature would enable a municipality to have a borrowing capacity of up to 2% of true property value for municipal purposes and 4% of true property value for schools.

Table 13

1961 Assessment and Equalization Data for All Taxing Districts in Middlesex County

	Assessed Value					*Equalization*	
Taxing District	*Value of Land*	*Assessed Value of Improvements*	*Total Assessed Value of Land and Improvements*	*Tax Rate*[1]	*Tax Ratio*[2]	*Amount by Which Value shall be Increased or Decreased*	*Aggregate True Value*
Carteret Borough	$ 4,186,210	$ 11,053,845	$ 15,240,055	17.78	16.08	$ 79,536,406	$ 97,121,529
Cranbury Township	1,360,400	3,119,200	4,479,600	7.72	24.90	13,510,761	18,381,434
Dunellen Borough	1,085,310	4,457,725	5,543,035	16.16	15.20	30,924,301	37,168,892
East Brunswick Township	6,866,700	19,894,372	26,761,072	11.39	23.68	86,250,212	113,991,677
Edison Township	8,769,576	44,882,148	53,651,724	9.89	19.02	228,428,844	285,419,007
Helmetta Borough	73,640	879,500	953,140	7.50	18.27	4,263,828	5,752,702
Highland Park Borough	3,626,350	14,413,750	18,040,100	9.28	30.74	40,645,977	59,352,199
Jamesburg Borough	547,325	2,454,150	3,001,475	9.87	33.75	5,910,474	9,016,809
Madison Township	3,592,400	16,866,420	20,458,820	12.54	16.98	100,028,930	120,281,526
Metuchen Borough	3,318,046	11,142,495	14,460,541	14.33	19.96	57,987,059	74,203,421
Middlesex Borough	2,251,760	8,717,020	10,968,780	14.27	18.80	47,375,794	59,172,987
Milltown Borough	1,185,300	5,142,425	6,327,725	8.25	21.48	23,130,957	29,793,563
Monroe Township	1,435,045	2,454,935	3,889,980	17.06	14.53	22,882,078	26,988,201
New Brunswick City	10,177,870	34,091,210	44,269,080	8.46	28.48	111,170,105	164,374,018
North Brunswick Tsp.	2,354,655	15,492,750	17,847,405	8.14	18.61	78,054,825	100,211,968
Perth Amboy City	18,631,095	36,282,570	54,913,665	10.09	33.03	111,340,241	177,188,894
Piscataway Township	3,627,217	16,489,967	20,117,184	12.38	20.68	77,161,269	100,118,313
Plainsboro Township	867,690	3,083,394	3,951,084	4.71	29.45	9,465,160	14,192,881
Sayreville Borough	3,677,925	26,509,675	30,187,600	7.09	19.25	122,661,008	160,740,925
South Amboy City	1,294,980	3,586,750	4,881,730	10.09	16.90	24,004,246	30,558,597
South Brunswick Tsp.	1,718,355	8,066,933	9,785,288	13.84	15.66	52,700,587	64,348,539
South Plainfield Boro.	5,968,275	31,742,425	37,710,700	5.77	45.07	45,960,700	88,110,077
South River Borough	2,479,200	6,443,905	8,923,105	15.61	16.86	44,001,598	53,358,411
Spotswood Borough	1,455,025	8,106,520	9,561,545	6.15	36.60	16,562,895	27,984,448
WOODBRIDGE TOWNSHIP	11,340,186	44,664,653	56,004,839	17.78	15.00	400,664,121	463,725,892
TOTALS	$101,890,535	$380,038,737	$481,929,272			$1,834,622,376	$2,381,556,910

1. General Tax Rate to Apply ($) Per $100 Valuation.
2. Average Ratio of Assessed to True Value of Real Property %.

In conclusion, then, it would seem that the borrowing capacity of Woodbridge has not been an important factor governing Township development programs. The legal capacity in the past has been exceeded, and in the future it seems likely that this capacity will be expanded. However, within this capacity, the reliance has been and will continue to be upon real property taxes. Thus, it becomes important to examine the trend of real property valuations in Woodbridge Township.

Bond Analysis of Woodbridge Township

As a part of analyzing the borrowing capacity of the Township, it is important to recognize the outstanding bonds of the Township. Table 14 shows all outstanding bonds and notes as of December 31, 1961. At present the Township has seven outstanding school bonds amounting to $7,554,000. This is approximately half of the Township's total outstanding indebtedness in bonds and notes, and it amounts to over 60% of the outstanding bonded debt of the municipality.*

Table 14

Woodbridge Township's Outstanding Debt

December 31, 1961

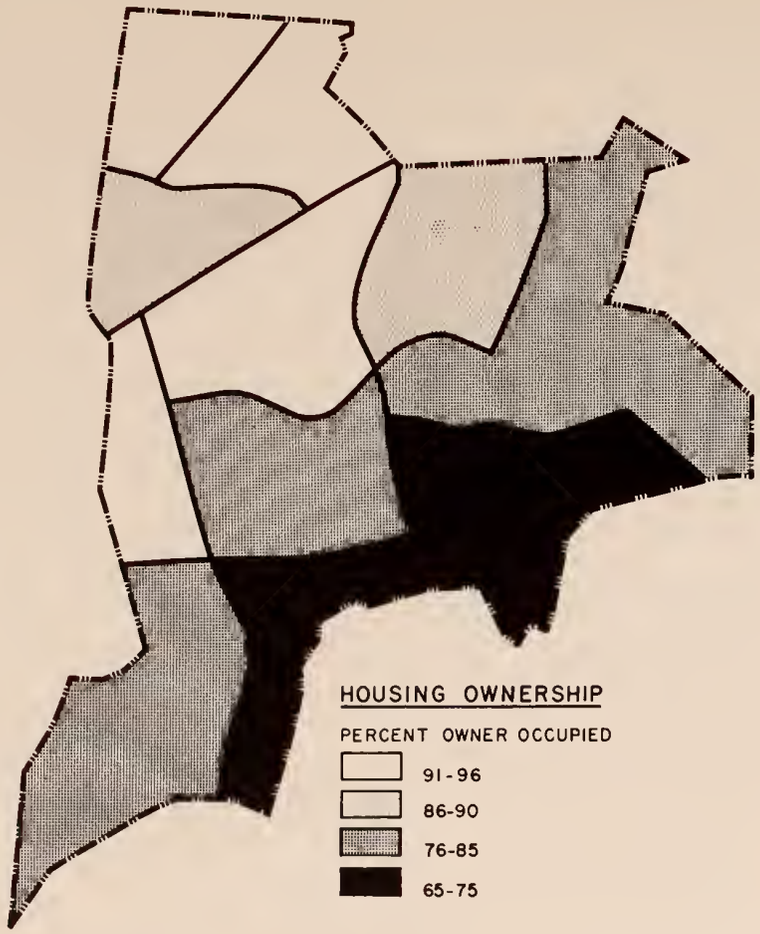
Bonds[1]	
General Refunding Bonds 4-1/4%, Due Serially to December 1, 1962	$ 215,000.00
Sewer Bonds 4%, Due Serially to July 1, 1969	53,000.00
Sewer Bonds 3.7%, Due Serially to February 1, 1984	4,450,000.00
Incinerator Bonds 3.7%, Due Serially to February 1, 1964	150,000.00
All School Bonds (Totals 7)	7,554,000.00
School Bonds Authorized but not Issued	4,500,000.00
Serial Bonds Authorized but not Issued	1,253,000.00
Total Outstanding Bonds	$18,175,000.00
Notes	
2.75% Due February 15, 1962 (1957 Sanitary Sewer Series)	$ 34,000.00
2.75% Due February 15, 1962 (1957 Curb and Gutter Series)	3,000.00
1.69% Due April 10, 1962 (1961 Capital Improvements)	150,000.00
1.90% Due May 2, 1962, 1960 Sanitary Sewer	1,794,000.00
2.55% Due November 2, 1962, Drummond Avenue Sanitary Sewer	7,000.00
Other Notes Outstanding	110,000.00
Total Outstanding Notes	$ 2,098,000.00
Grand Total	$20,273,000.00

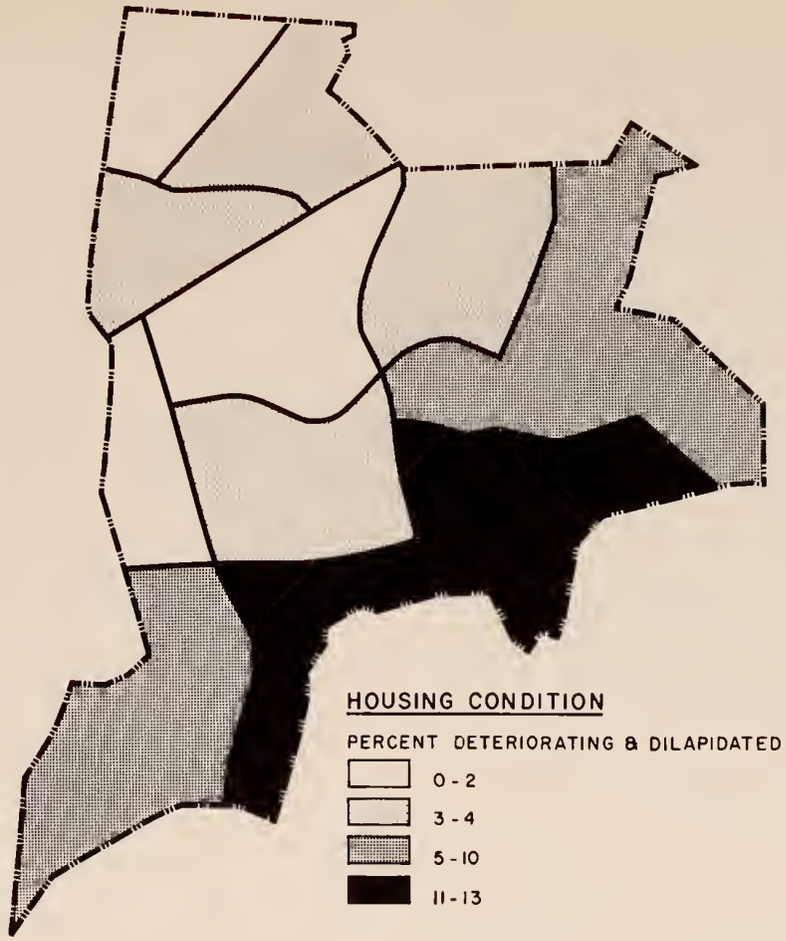
1. Dollar figures refers to amount outstanding as of December 31, 1961.

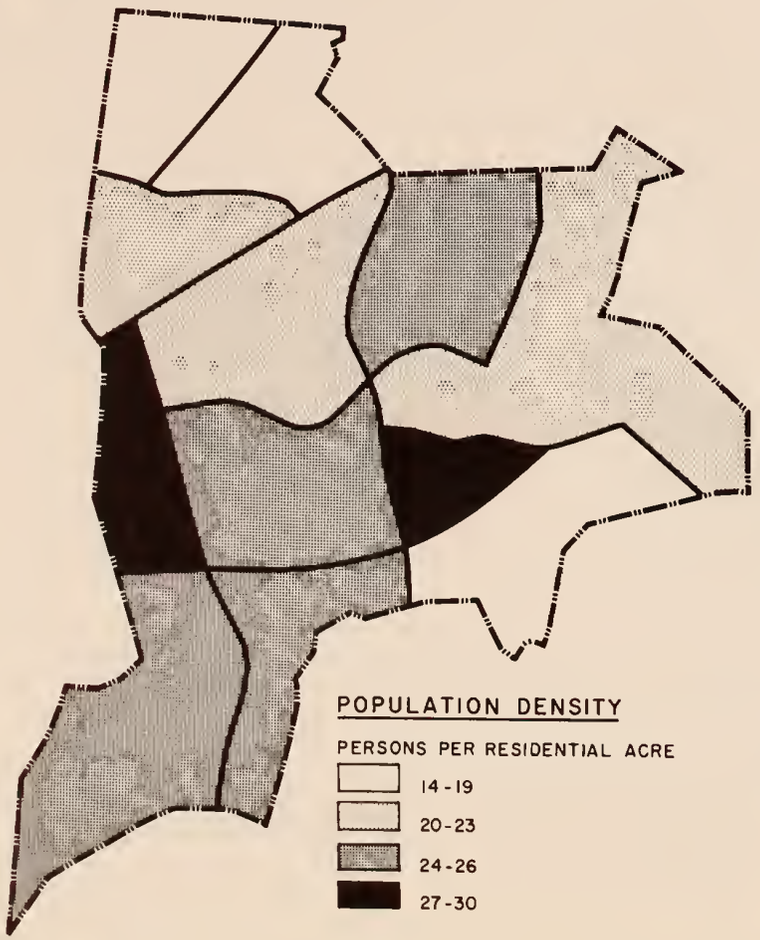
* Excludes bonds authorized but not issued.

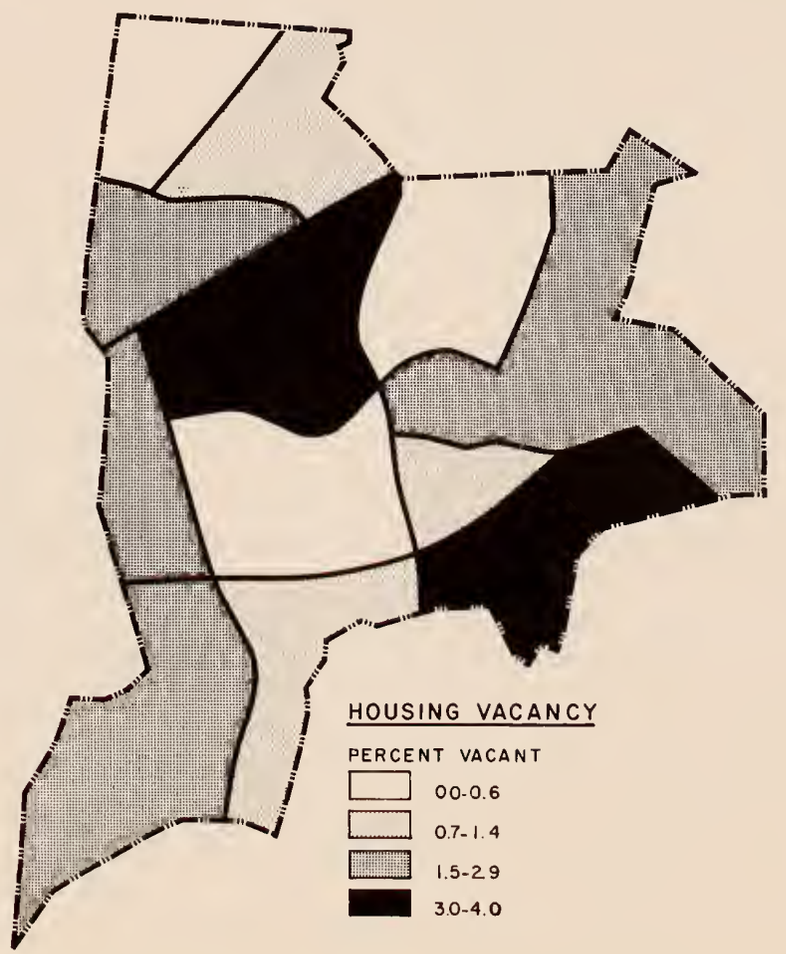
Further, is is assumed that the Township will soon advertise for bids on a school bond issue of $4,500,000, which was authorized in the election late last year. It is anticipated that this bond issue will have an eighteen-year term with principal payments amounting to $250,000 annually. The bond issue will be used to finance a very large addition to Woodbridge High School, a new Iselin High School, and land purchases for a future high school in Colonia and an elementary school. This $4,500,000 school issue will raise the total outstanding debt of the Township to over $20 million. Of this, school bonds will total $12 million and the total bonded debt will total approximately $18 million. Thus, when the new issue is out, school bonds will represent more than 60% of the total Township debt and over 65% of the total bonded debt of the Township. Moreover, the school development pressures on the Township will not be over with this increment; there will doubtless be others to follow.

Rehabilitation and conservation activities under a non-cash local formula would seem to be advisable as a means of protecting the real property base which is the financial source of virtually all renewal activity. Even more strongly, the advisability of sound developments on the presently vacant land in the Township can be recommended as a means of expanding the tax base and providing the necessary support for continued growth of essential Township services.



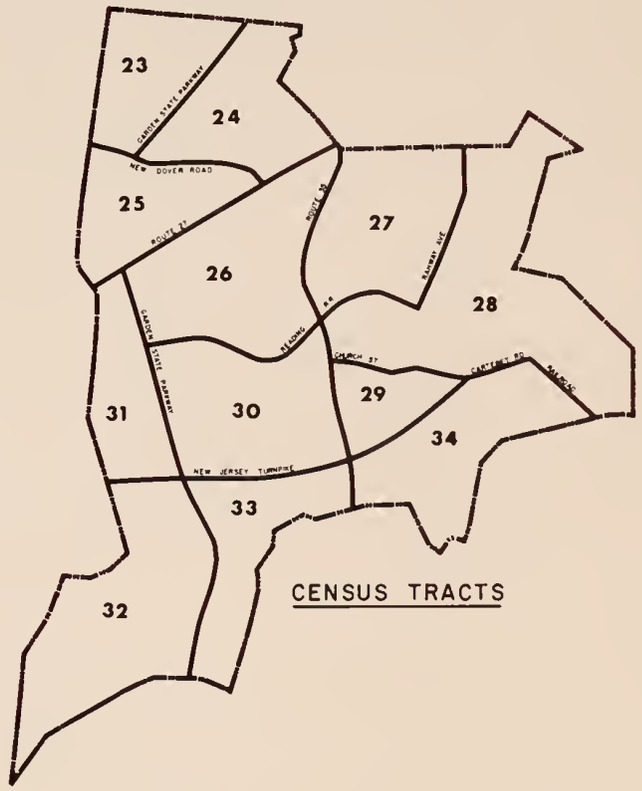






1960 CENSUS REVIEW

SOURCE: 1960 U.S. CENSUS OF POPULATION & HOUSING
ADVANCE TABLE PH-1



COMMUNITY RENEWAL PROGRAM

WOODBRIDGE, N.J.

WOODBRIDGE REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY

VICTOR GRUEN ASSOCIATES
ARCHITECTURE · ENGINEERING · PLANNING

Chapter VI – BUILDING CONDITION ANALYSIS

Census Review

The United States Census of Housing offers a variety of information useful in analyzing blight and deterioration in local communities. The specific data available varies from one community to another. In the 1960 Census, data for a limited number of characteristics are presentd by city blocks. Statistics for 467 cities and localities are published in 421 separate reports. In general, these are the larger cities and urban areas of the country whose 1950 population exceeded 50,000.

In addition, information by census tracts on both housing and population subjects are published for 180 tracted areas in the United States and Puerto Rico. Statistics for Woodbridge are included in these census tract reports.

Table 15 shows a summary of selected data for Woodbridge from Census Tract Bulletin No. 1, a preliminary release of population and housing statistics, 1960 for Middlesex County.

The table compares the various census tracts in Woodbridge with respect to population density, and housing unit ownership, vacancy, and condition. To derive density figures, the approximate area devoted to residential use was calculated for each census tract and these figures were divided into the appropriate population totals.

The data shown can be used in making a preliminary evaluation of blight in Woodbridge.

A striking similarity can be noted in the maps depicting housing ownership and housing condition. As might be expected, the census tracts showing a high degree of deterioration showed a low degree of owner occupancy thus suggesting that pride of ownership is important in encouraging the proper maintenance of dwellings.

Table 15
Summary of 1960 U.S. Census of Housing
Woodbridge, New Jersey

	Area		*People*		*Housing Units*						
Census Tract	*Total (in acres)*	*Resid. (in acres)*	*Total*	*Persons Per Res. Acre*	*Total*	*Owner Occup. No.*	*Owner Occup. %*	*Vacant No.*	*Vacant %*	*Deter. & Dilap. No.*	*Deter. & Dilap. %*
23	805	445	7,759	17.4	1,895	1,808	95.4	10	0.5	47	2.5
24	985	365	5,373	14.7	1,439	1,331	92.5	20	1.4	46	3.2
25	850	320	7,587	23.7	2,048	1,803	87.9	48	2.3	90	4.4
26	1,500	480	10,638	22.2	2,695	2,461	91.4	83	3.8	69	2.6
27	1,175	345	8,437	24.5	2,069	1,817	88.8	12	0.6	70	3.4
28	2,290	305	7,144	23.4	2,114	1,776	84.1	40	1.9	121	5.7
29	435	170	4,777	28.1	1,547	1,026	66.3	18	1.2	173	11.2
30	1,335	230	5,529	24.0	1,629	1,252	76.9	10	0.6	49	3.0
31	750	245	7,218	29.5	1,663	1,551	93.3	36	2.2	15	0.9
32	1,795	320	8,042	25.2	2,389	2,001	83.7	28	1.7	234	9.8
33	970	125	3,207	25.7	959	714	74.5	13	1.4	121	12.6
34	1,185	165	3,034	18.3	912	670	73.5	28	3.0	119	13.1
TOTAL	14,075	3,515	78,745*		21,359	18,209		346		1,154	
AVERAGE				22.4			85.3		1.6		5.4

*Official census population, (78,846) includes 101 persons enumerated as members of crews of vessels. These are not included in above total.

SOURCE: Advance Table PH-1

Standards for Evaluation of Structures

References to "Slums" and "Blight" are of little meaning unless each is specifically defined. "Slums" are defined by Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary as "thickly populated streets or alleys marked by squalor or wretched living conditions." The implication pictures an area with high densities of people accompanied by decaying and deteriorating buildings.

The term "Blight" is distinct from "Slum". Blight is often applied to living things and defined as "any disease or injury . . . resulting in withering, cessation of growth, and death of parts . . . without rotting."

A neighborhood or community is essentially a living thing with the potential of growth and development. Anything which frustrates the realization of full development, arrests, suspends, or otherwise restricts the best possible use of land and location, is for all practical purposes a blighting influence.

Blight may result from poorly laid out residential or commercial areas, rundown buildings or premises, incompatible mixed land uses, poor streets, inadequate facilities, or any other condition which discourages investment in either developed or vacant areas.

A recent Township tax revaluation survey furnished significant information in analyzing the nature and extent of blight in Woodbridge. Of specific interest in this survey was an evaluation of structures based on "observed physical condition". Each structure was classified into one of four categories: "Good", "Normal", "Fair", or "Poor". Field checks were made to determine the relationship of these ratings to actual conditions. From these observations, the following relationships were revealed:

"Good" was applied to buildings in generally excellent condition and exhibiting virtually perfect maintenance.

"Normal" was applied to buildings maintained to a somewhat lower level. Evidence of one or more minor defects in the property was responsible for this difference in classification. These defects might include slight damage to porch or steps, slight defects or lack of paint, small cracks in walls, plaster or chimneys or broken gutters or downspouts. Generally speaking, with a minimum amount of expense and material, often simply a coat of paint, the classification of these buildings could have been raised to that of "Good".

"Fair" represented buildings with a generally low level of maintenance. These can be characterized as buildings in need of more repair than would be provided in the course of regular maintenance. Defects of a more serious nature are present. Examples of such defects are: shaky or unsafe porch or steps; broken plaster; rotted window sills or frames.

"Poor" denoted buildings that could not be considered as providing safe and adequate shelter. One or more critical defects resulting from continued neglect or a combination of the defects as noted under "Fair", or of inadequate original construction characterized buildings in this grouping. Repairs adequate to bring such a building into a satisfactory habitable condition would generally not be warranted.

As might be expected, age had a strong relationship to condition. However, there were numerous cases of older buildings, thirty years of age, forty years of age, and even older, being classified "Normal" and "Good". More surprising was the number of relatively new buildings, ten years of age and less, that were rated less than "Good". Some subdivisions built in the mid-fifties contain buildings nearly all of which were rated "Normal". In most cases, these were subdivisions with closely spaced houses and poorly constructed streets.

In renewal, the terms commonly used to express the eligibility of an area for specific activities are standard and sub-standard. However, because of the necessity to distinguish between buildings suitable for rehabilitation as opposed to those beyond repair, the "substandard" buildings are divided into two groups and described by Census Bureau definitions. In this study, the terms will be used as follows:

Standard shall be roughly the equivalent of the Census Bureau definition of *Sound*. Here the definition is expanded to cover non-residential structures as well as residential and is defined as structures with nothing more than slight defects.

Deteriorating shall correspond generally to the Census Bureau definition. The term shall be used to indicate buildings with defects of a more serious nature.

Dilapidated will be used as in the Census Bureau definition and will signify buildings generally considered beyond repair.

To relate the four original classifications, "Good", "Normal", "Fair", and "Poor" to the latter three, "Standard", "Deteriorating", and "Dilapidated", the first two were combined to make up the "Standard" classification.

To test this relationship, housing statistics from the 1960 Census were used. Following is a table of comparison:

Tax Survey		*1960 Census*	
Category	*Number*	*Category*	*Number*
Fair	953	Deteriorating	961
Poor	326	Dilapidated	193
Totals	1,279		1,154

Although this indicates some disagreement in the lowest category, it was felt that the combined totals were significantly close and that any building classified in the tax survey as either "Fair", or "Poor" would appropriately be considered "substandard".

Certain characteristics and conditions are nearly always present in rundown buildings. For instance, the exterior is generally in need of paint. Roofing, especially around the cornice and porches, porch railings, etc., is often in poor condition. Where there are auxiliary buildings, the principal building is usually accompanied by leaning sheds, sagging garages, or other unpainted outbuildings on poorly maintained yards.

Rating systems are often used to determine the degree of sub-standardness. This involves setting values to individual conditions. In this manner, defects can be ascribed point values reflecting the seriousness of the condition in relation to set standards; the accumulation of points determine whether a building is standard or substandard, in accordance with the standards of the particular locality. However, point assignments tend to become too mechanical and the results have to be revised after "point total" results are reached. With this in mind, a broad, general rating system has been devised.

Rating System

Following this section are two checklists. The first is for rating residential buildings, the second is for non-residential buildings. These checklists were devised for the sole purpose of identifying urban renewal study areas within the Township. In this process, although each property is evaluated and rated as to relative condition, this evaluation is in no way meant to be absolute or final. It is strictly an indication of condition and is to be used merely for identifying areas containing a significant number of run-down and poorly maintained buildings. Following this process, attention can be focused on certain areas to determine more accurately the degree of sub-standardness.

This final rating will be done by the Township code enforcement officer who will make a detailed interior and exterior analysis of each structure.

Several types of conditions are considered: minor and major physical defects; and functional characteristics such as lack of central heating, electricity, etc. A building might be classified "substandard" by the lack of a private toilet even though the physical condition may be good; however, as a rule, the physical condition is closely related to the facilities, that is, a building lacking central heating or private bath is probably also poorly maintained.

Discovery of any of the conditions appearing on the checklist can produce a rating by applying the formulas that follow:

RESIDENTIAL

A building to be classified *"Standard"* shall be deficient in no more than three respects as listed under *Minor*. Four *minor* deficiencies or more, or a single deficiency under any of the other two categories, shall lower the building to *"Deteriorating"*. The accumulation of three or more deficiencies under the *Major* category shall lower the rating to *"Dilapidated"*.

NON-RESIDENTIAL

One deficiency in either category shall lower the classification to *"Deteriorating"* and the accumulation of two or more structure deficiencies shall lower the rating to *"Dilapidated"*.

*Deficiency Check List for Residential Structures in Urban Renewal Study Areas

Minor Deficiency

1. Discolored, loose, or peeling paint.
2. Missing or crooked shingles.
3. Cracked masonry wall, including foundation.
4. Cracked chimney.
5. Incomplete or improper painting or surfacing of exterior walls giving a temporary or patchwork appearance.
6. Broken or crooked gutters or downspouts.
7. Crooked or sagging porch railings or latticework.

Major Deficiency

1. Foundation lacking or evidencing holes or open cracks, loose and/or spalling materials.
2. Interior or exterior walls, floors, and/or roof evidencing holes, cracks, or rotted, loose, or missing materials or in a sagging or leaning condition.
3. Interior or exterior stairs, porch, or railings shaky, unsafe, damaged or excessively worn.
4. Doors, door sills, or frames rotted, excessively worn or damaged.
5. Windows broken and/or window frames or sashes broken, rotted, severely damaged, or loosened.
6. Chimney of makeshift nature, damaged or unsafe (stovepipe or other uninsulated material leading directly to the outside through a hole in the roof, wall or window).
7. Conversion to dwelling use of cellars, garage and other structures not intended for residential occupancy or for permanent living quarters.
8. Exposed or makeshift electrical wiring.

Facility Deficiency

1. No central heating.
2. No electrical service.
3. No private kitchen for each dwelling unit (kitchen to include cooking facilities and sink with hot and cold running water).
4. No private bath for each dwelling unit (bath to include tub or shower, toilet, lavatory and hot and cold running water).
5. Drainage of facilities inadequate, or improperly designed or installed system.

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* When determination from this list creates substandard rating for a structure, this structure will be inspected by code enforcement officers for final determination.

***Deficiency Check List for Non-Residential Structures in Urban Renewal Study Areas**

Structural Deficiency

1. Extensive evidence of discolored, loose, or peeling paint.
2. Foundation lacking or evidencing holes, cracks, or rotted, loose, or missing materials; or sagging or leaning condition.
3. Walls or roof evidencing holes, cracks, or rotted loose, or missing materials; or sagging or leaning conditions.
4. Stairs, porches, or loading platforms shaky, unsafe, damaged or excessively worn.
5. Doors, door sills or frames rotted, excessively worn or considerably damaged.
6. Windows broken or window frames or sashes broken, rotted, severely damaged or loosened.
7. Chimney damaged or unsafe; or stovepipe or other uninsulated device leading directly to the outside through a hole in the roof, wall, or window.
8. Exposed or makeshift electrical wiring.

Facility Deficiency

1. No central heat or inadequate or unsafe space heaters where heating is necessary.
2. Lack of adequate hot and cold running water supply if necessary to use of structures.
3. Inadequate toilet facilities with relation to the sex and number of persons to be served.
4. Inadequate off-street loading facilities.
5. Inadequate vehicle parking.
6. Inadequate access and egress.
7. Inadequate exit facilities.

* When determination from this list creates substandard rating for a structure, this structure will be inspected by code enforcement officers for final determination.

Identification of Renewal Study Areas

Of Woodbridge's 21,359 housing units counted in the 1960 Census, 1154 or 5.4 percent of the total were classified as either dilapidated (193) or deteriorating (961).

The table below shows how Woodbridge compares with the State as a whole, Middlesex County, and each of the other three municipalities in the County containing more than 10,000 housing units. It will be noted from the table that both Woodbridge and adjacent Edison Township contain very low percentages of deterioration. This undoubtedly stems from the fact that both municipalities are made up largely of recently built single-family homes. Woodbridge, in fact, saw more homes built between 1950 and 1960 than in all previous years combined.

	Housing Units	*Deteriorating & Dilapidated*	*Percent*
New Jersey	1,998,796	246,661	12.4
Middlesex County	125,347	12,400	9.9
Edison Township	12,576	783	6.2
New Brunswick	12,480	2,298	18.4
Perth Amboy	12,546	2,240	17.9
Woodbridge Township	21,359	1,154	5.4

SOURCE: 1960 U.S. Census of Housing.

This low percentage of deterioration for the Township is good. However, the presence of over 1100 substandard housing units is not insignificant. Moreover, we must keep in mind that this figure represents residences only and does not include non-residential buildings in deteriorating condition.

The blight pattern is shown on the drawing, "Building Condition". This map is based on information from the recent tax revaluation survey, discussed in the previous section, and shows in a generalized manner the substandard buildings in the Township.

A dot is used to represent a building either residential or non-residential classified as "poor" in the tax survey. In the same manner, a circle is used to represent a building classified as "fair". To relate these classifications to those of the U.S. Census Bureau, field checks were used to determine that the categories of "poor" and "dilapidated" were roughly equivalent to each other, as were those of "fair" and "deteriorating". Therefore, although the map shows tax survey information, checks with census information indicate that the pattern formed is supported by census data. The size of the dots and circles has been exaggerated so that the pattern becomes more apparent and no attempt has been made to show the buildings in "standard" condition.

Of special significance is the fact that of the substandard buildings only about 1 in 5 is dilapidated. This indicates that much of the blight has not reached an advanced stage, and strongly suggests that any urban renewal in Woodbridge will very likely be keyed to conservation and rehabilitation and not to clearance. This technique will produce significant improvement without the disturbing effect of relocation.

The overall blight pattern is of a rather scattered nature with nearly every part of the Township containing at least a few substandard buildings. Significant concentration or clusters do occur, however, in several areas. For the most part, these areas include the central parts of the older sections of the Township. This is especially noticeable in Woodbridge Center and Port Reading.

The drawing, "Renewal Study Areas," shows nine Study Areas. Eight of these are based on building condition. In general, these areas are defined to include contiguous blocks, each containing two or more substandard buildings.

The areas shown are generalized and the limits of the areas are in no sense meant to be absolute boundaries. Inasmuch as the drawing, "Building Condition," does not show buildings in standard condition, the approximate percentages of substandard buildings to the total for each Study Area are shown in the following table:

Renewal Study Areas	*Area (In Acres)*	*Buildings*		
		Sub-Standard	*Total*	*% of Total*
Avenel	80	43	230	19
Iselin	90	45	350	13
Fords	70	32	310	10
Hopelawn	65	35	260	13
Keasbey	300	90	220	41
Port Reading	90	52	230	23
Sewaren	90	42	220	19
Woodbridge Center	200	115	575	20

The clay-pit area between U. S. Routes 1 and 9 near the center of the Township presents a special problem. It is a sizeable area containing over 200 acres. Furthermore, its location within the Township is extremely important for it lies between the two major highways with unlimited access in the Township. Topographic difficulties have so far discouraged intensive use of the land. In view of this, the clay-pit area is included as a separate study area.

Each of the first eight renewal study areas shown on the Renewal Study Area drawing represents areas with a concernable percentage of deterioration. Based on building condition alone, it appears that Fords, Hopelawn and Iselin, individually fall considerably short of the 20 percent substandardness level necessary for Federal Urban Renewal eligibility. Further studies will be necessary to determine if any part of these three Areas are eligible for Federal assistance under the present law.

On the other hand, based again on building condition, part or all of the Avenel, Keasbey, Port Reading, Sewaren and Woodbridge Center Study Areas appear to meet the Federal eligibility level with respect to building deficiencies. Furthermore, each of these Areas is marked by a variety of environmental deficiencies ranging from overcrowding of buildings on the land to lack or inadequacy of public improvements and utilities, such as streets, sidewalks, sewers, etc.

For the purposes of establishing an urban renewal program, the study areas of Fords, Hopelawn and Iselin are considered for locally initiated and sponsored treatment. In other words, no Federal assistance is contemplated for these areas.

Each of the other five study areas is considered to be eligible for Federal assistance. These areas are discussed more fully in Chapter VIII, Potential Project Areas.

BUILDING CONDITION

LEGEND

- ∘ FAIR
- • POOR

SOURCE: TAX EVALUATION SURVEY-1959
FIELD CHECKED OCTOBER-1961

NOTE: BUILDINGS IN GOOD AND NORMAL CONDITION NOT SHOWN

0 2000 4000 1 MILE 8000
SCALE IN FEET

NORTH

COMMUNITY RENEWAL PROGRAM

WOODBRIDGE, N.J.

WOODBRIDGE REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY

VICTOR GRUEN ASSOCIATES
ARCHITECTURE · ENGINEERING · PLANNING

RENEWAL STUDY AREAS

LEGEND

RENEWAL STUDY AREA

1 AVENEL

2 FORDS

3 HOPELAWN

4 ISELIN

5 KEASBEY

6 PORT READING

7 SEWAREN

8 WOODBRIDGE

9 CLAY PITS

0 2000 4000 1 MILE 8000
SCALE IN FEET

NORTH

COMMUNITY RENEWAL PROGRAM

WOODBRIDGE, N.J.

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PART 2 – RECOMMENDATIONS

Chapter VII – GOALS AND ELEMENTS OF PROGRAM

The citizens of Woodbridge are concerned about the nature of the community in which they live. This is evidenced by the many active civic organizations in the Township. A city or community can be looked upon as a living organism capable of providing happiness or frustration, inspiration or despair, to a multitude of people. It is undoubtedly the desire of every citizen to achieve the best possible living environment.

People have different ideas of how they want to live. The quiet pleasantness of individual houses on tree-lined streets appeal to many people, while others choose to live in apartments. Still others prefer any one of a multitude of still different living environments. To meet the desires of the various segments of the population, a variety of urban environments must be provided. The key to a successful urban pattern is diversity.

Woodbridge faces serious challenges but also significant opportunities. In population, it is the eighth largest municipality in the state. Indications are that it will rank even higher by the end of the decade.

Although classified as a municipality, Woodbridge bears little physical resemblance to the other communities in its population group. This is largely the result of its unusually extensive area, approximately 23 square miles.

It can be better described as a decentralized city, a city whose downtown has failed to materialize as the strong retail center of the Township. Instead, retail growth has occurred primarily along the arterial highways and in the individual neighborhoods. Residential growth has taken place over wide areas and in the form of rather high density single-family houses, many of which contain three and four bedrooms. This has encouraged the in-migration of large families and has put unusually severe pressures on the Township school system.

The original neighborhoods have been severed by new high-speed transportation routes leaving residential pockets isolated from the remainder of the Township. These, along with numerous railroad lines and additional factors such as power lines and public rights-of-way, have altered the neighborhood structure over the years and now seriously impede any restructuring of the Township along more satisfactory boundaries.

The elementary school is generally considered the focal center of the neighborhood. Thus the capacity of the school determines the size of the population served. In New Jersey, the optimum size of an elementary school is considered to be about 300 to 500 pupils. Depending on family size and density of development, the size of a neighborhood in this area could be calculated as being between 2,000 and 5,000 persons. If the school is within one-half mile walking distance of each dwelling, the neighborhood could cover an area of about 500 acres.

These generally accepted neighborhood principles are not easy to apply in Woodbridge. Iselin, Colonia, and Avenel are overly-large, both with respect to area and population. They each could be divided into smaller areas or sub-neighborhoods. Hopelawn, Port Reading and Sewaren come closer to fitting the generally accepted neighborhood definition.

In addition to the neighborhood analysis, an important part of this study was a separate analysis of the economic factors and financial capabilities of the Township. This report furnished the economic framework which was used to measure Woodbridge's potential for future growth, and more importantly, its capacity for meeting the financial requirements of any action for the over-all improvement of Woodbridge. The study revealed serious problems, especially with respect to current resources and taxation policies.

These are some of the problems facing Woodbridge. They are serious but not impossible to overcome. Opportunities are available for improving the overall living environment of the Township.

To progress in an orderly and economic manner, the citizens must unite behind common goals and objectives. A set of comprehensive community goals has been formulated for guiding Woodbridge in its future growth. It must be understood that these are the goals that are appropriate today. As changes occur throughout the Township and Region, it is necessary that the municipal officials examine and revise the goals from time to time.

COMMUNITY GOALS

The Township must maintain its territorial integrity.

Since the time when the present Woodbridge boundaries were established, several attempts have been made to change them. Efforts are currently underway by a group of citizens in Port Reading and Sewaren to secede from Woodbridge Township and incorporate a new municipality to be called Port Waren. Such a move would be against the best interests of the Township as a whole. Answers do not lie in the further fragmentation of the State by the creation of additional cities, boroughs, towns, villages or townships, but in consolidation and cooperation. Many of the problems plaguing our communities today arise from factors that extend beyond the borders of the individual municipalities and, therefore, defy solution by a single community acting independently. Cooperation between Woodbridge and neighboring municipalities should be maintained and increased; efforts exerted in the essentially negative proposals to change the existing boundaries would be better directed towards developing solutions for the overall problems of the Township.

Woodbridge must achieve a unified township identity.

Individual neighborhoods now dominate the Township scene, with citizens of the various parts of the Township associating themselves more closely with Fords, Sewaren, Iselin, etc. than with Woodbridge Township. The existence of separately named post offices, fire stations, schools, etc. fosters this parochial attitude. Wherever possible, the Woodbridge residents should be encouraged to think of themselves more as being part of Woodbridge Township, a single, unified municipal unit. Although the neighborhood names can be expected to exist for some time to come, their use on signs, buildings, etc. should be limited as much as possible.

Woodbridge must protect and improve its economic stability.

Non-residential growth in the Township has not kept pace with the rapid rate of residential development. This, along with other factors, has resulted in increased tax pressure on the residential property owners. A better balance between the various land uses would tend to relieve some of this pressure. With proper measures, a considerable portion of the business lost to the surrounding areas can be attracted back to Woodbridge. New and improved shopping facilities are needed along with additional industry.

The Township must renew and modernize its physical structure.

Although neighborhood deterioration in Woodbridge is not severe, it is significant and, therefore, should receive attention. Substandard areas must be upgraded by the improvement and renovation of those rundown buildings suitable for rehabilitation; buildings beyond saving should be demolished and the land made available for more productive uses. Inadequate and poorly-designed streets and sidewalks must be resurfaced, widened, or otherwise improved. The aim is to provide every citizen in the Township with a safe, efficient, and pleasant living environment.

Woodbridge must achieve a greater degree of order in the use of land.

Non-residential land use is now oriented strongly towards the several major highways with unlimited access and toward the waterfront. Numerous mixed uses are located throughout the Township. New development should be encouraged to locate in areas appropriate to the use and also in such a way as to minimize problems of traffic, noise, etc. An effort should be made to keep incompatible land uses separate, and to appropriately blend those varying uses that are compatible with and complementary to each other.

The Township must improve its local road system.

Travel between the various neighborhoods is now severely impaired due to the insufficient number of connecting roads. The entire local road network should be strengthened by the addition of certain roads and by the improvement and widening of others. Stress should be placed on better integrating the local road system with the major through highways.

The Township must improve and expand its cultural resources and its community facilities and services.

Woodbridge is presently inadequately supplied with many necessary and desirable facilities, such as parks, playgrounds, schools, civic buildings and utility services. To meet present needs and anticipated future growth, additional recreation and cultural facilities and programs should be provided by the Township. New and enlarged government and civic facilities would appear desirable and sanitary facilities should be expanded.

Woodbridge must preserve its natural assets.

The Township enjoys a variety of landscape including several miles of waterfront, several small ponds, a sizable amount of pleasant rolling land, and numerous wooded areas and stream beds. Woodbridge should encourage the preservation of these natural features for the benefit of the entire community or see that they are developed and used in the best interest of the Township.

To achieve these goals, a wide variety of tools is available. While urban renewal is an important tool, broad, bold measures, far beyond the scope of individual renewal projects, are vital if Woodbridge is to realize its full potential. These measures lie primarily in the field of individual planning proposals.

Planning Elements

1. Creation of New Township Center

A most important structural element now lacking in Woodbridge is a strong central business area. This would undoubtedly be invaluable in unifying the now divided Township and would provide a focus for community activities.

A sales analysis in the economic study showed that a large portion of the spending in four major comparison-type shopping categories is being spent outside the Township. This is especially true of department store sales where virtually all of the expenditures are "exported". Opportunity does therefore exist to retain or recapture some of these exported dollars.

In addition to this, continued growth can be expected within the Township and, more importantly, within the county and region. It is therefore a reasonable assumption that, given a major retail tenant as a strong magnet, a regional shopping center could be developed within the Township.

A New York department store has recently proposed a new multi-million dollar center on a site at the intersection of U. S. Route 1 and Gill Lane. The site is reasonably well situated; however, it is limited in several ways. The property fronts primarily on Route 1 and lacks direct access to a second major highway. Furthermore, the site is limited by a railroad to the north and is penetrated by a cemetery and an industrial facility from the East.

The development of this type center is extremely important to the Township. On a more appropriate site, it could furnish the commercial nucleus necessary for the creation of a new township center. To accommodate all the various buildings and uses associated with the center, a site larger than the one under consideration would be required. We recommend that the Township investigate other possible sites. The existing Woodbridge center (Main Street) is severely limited due to both poor access to major highways and lack of the quantities of open land necessary for the full range of facilities appropriate to such a center.

The clay pit area between Routes 1 and 9 should be explored as a possible site. The location is good, and with the improvement of Metuchen Avenue, direct access is possible to both major routes. The land is entirely in private ownership. Of primary importance is the size of the area. It covers well over 200 acres and, although most of this is affected by topographical problems, a sizable part is relatively level and suitable for immediate development. Compared to the Menlo Park site of approximately 100 acres, the total clay pit site is roughly three times larger.

In view of its strategic location in the Township, this area may qualify as an Open Land Exception Project under Urban Renewal. Federal loans and advances, but not grants, are available for projects of this type. Funds are limited to 2½ percent of the gross project costs of all urban renewal projects undertaken to date. In connection with this, a feasibility survey would probably be required.

In any event, Woodbridge should fully investigate the development potentials and costs of this area. Engineering studies should be made to determine how best to use the excavated areas. The use and development of this land which will be in the best interest of the Township is important.

If sufficient commercial interest is shown, the Township should draw plans for a new business-civic-cultural center on this site. This location would then replace the present Main Street area as the center of governmental activities. Widespread opportunities exist for providing the shopping, cultural, and entertainment-recreation facilities suitable for a community approaching a population of 100,000.

The nucleus of this center would be commercial establishments consisting of one or possibly two large department stores, and various other facilities such as supermarkets, variety stores, restaurants, drug stores, a bank, etc. Numerous other stores and shops would of course be included.

The principal building in the civic group should be a new expanded municipal building, including adequate space for administrative offices, health office, court rooms, etc. Other buildings could include a public auditorium, museum, post office, library with possibly bookmobile service to the neighborhoods, fire station, and miscellaneous semi-public and fraternal uses such as a YM and YWCA, YM and YWHA, Boys Club, Athletic Center, Lions Club, Elks Club, etc.

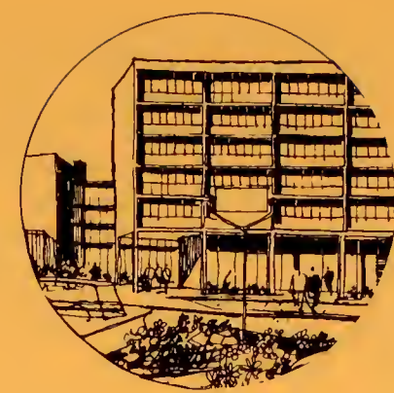
An appropriately located medical center with clinic facilities and office space for doctors should be considered. Additional office space should be provided whether it is in one building or several.

An attempt should be made to balance these various uses so that the area is active and alive in the evening as well as the daytime. This can be achieved by adding a motion picture theater and facilities for ice-skating, roller skating, bowling, billiards, swimming, etc.

Adequate well-planned parking is obviously a necessity. Service to the various stores should be provided through the use of underground ramps if possible.

At a convenient location, a bus terminal should be constructed. This terminal would be under cover and would provide pleasant all-weather waiting areas with newsstands, refreshment counters, etc.

The various buildings must be interrelated in every way. Pedestrian plazas with fountains, gardens, benches, statuary, and other visual elements can create a highly desirable physical environment in which to shop, meet, and participate in the various activities available in this new downtown area.



Civic Center

Apartments

WOODBRIDGE
SHOWING THE CLAY PIT AREA

Shopping Center

Pedestrian Plaza

Sketches serve to illustrate the intended character of the new central area.

2. Master Plan Updating

Since 1959, when the Woodbridge planning studies were published, a considerable amount of additional community information has been gathered and made available. Both the 1960 U. S. Census of Population and Housing and the recent tax reappraisal survey contain important data useful in restudying Woodbridge. In addition, aerial photographs of the entire Township have been completed. From these photographs, additional information will be prepared including topographic maps. These will aid immeasurably in the preparation of revised base maps, differentiating between existing streets and unimproved or "paper" streets, and in the planning of new streets, expansion of the storm and sanitary sewer system, additional water lines, etc.

In view of these, plus changes that have occurred since 1959, Woodbridge should undertake a program of updating the Master Plan Studies. Furthermore, to make the plan more comprehensive, an economic study, going beyond the one prepared for this community renewal report and a traffic and neighborhood parking study should be included, among others.

The Proposed Land Use Map (Suggested Development Plan) should be restudied. It may reflect the best pattern for development; however, changes in some of the land use boundaries might be advisable. Based on information compiled for the Community Renewal Study, a few general comments can be made concerning land use.

Land Use—Until a solution to the problem of school financing can be found, Woodbridge should continue its policy of underzoning for residential use. This problem can be illustrated as follows:

Based on current statistics with regard to educational costs per student and the dollar per year tax return from single-family residential property, it is estimated that Woodbridge experiences a tax deficit of approximately $600 for each new house constructed. Since apartments generally produce a more favorable balance between tax return and municipal service costs, the construction of apartments, especially those limited to one and two bedroom units should be encouraged.

Woodbridge should explore the work underway throughout the country where solutions to these school financial problems are being attempted. One method is the acceptance of a state income and/or sales tax in return for greater state participation in school financing.

In addition, efforts are underway elsewhere concerning the responsibilities of subdividers in providing school facilities. The following sources should be investigated:

—The National Association of Home Builders.

—The National Association of School Board Administrators.

—The Pennsylvania Board of Public Instruction.

—The Educational Facility Laboratory of the Ford Foundation.

In New Jersey, the State Tax Policy Commission is currently studying the problem of how to pay for expanded school aid. This study has recently been enlarged to include a full scale analysis of the entire state and local tax structure. This study should result in some important recommendations.

Commercial uses and industry of all types should be encouraged. The commercial, however, should not be permitted to align itself along the major and secondary arterials as in the past but should be limited as far as possible to certain locations.

3. Circulation and Traffic Study

Either as part of the Master Plan updating or as a separate study, Woodbridge should make a detailed analysis of traffic and circulation throughout the Township. Emphasis should be placed on the strengthening and improvement of the existing local street network to meet today's needs. For the most part, circulation within each neighborhood is limited because of insufficient and inadequate streets. Of more importance is the lack of adequate connector streets between each neighborhood. These deficiencies should be corrected.

A truck by-pass route should be provided so that trucks from the Port Reading and Sewaren parts of the Township do not have to use Main Street, Woodbridge, to get to U. S. Route 1 and other major routes.

It is especially important that the local highways are properly integrated with the new Interstate Route 287 when it is constructed.

4. Industrial Promotion

There has developed an intense community awareness of the economic advantages of securing new industrial plants. Woodbridge, with a major share of its vacant land zoned for industry offers a wide variety of sites to prospective new industrial concerns. The Township is attempting to take full advantage of this opportunity by instituting an active program of industrial expansion and promotion.

Previous to seeking new industry, however, the Township, through its Industrial Council, should inquire into the problems of industry already located in the Township.

It is understood, for instance, that at least one major organization would like to expand its facilities at its present site. However, it is reluctant to do so without assurance that the access roads into the area will be improved, since this is already a problem. These problems should be discussed and solutions found. The Township should make every effort to satisfy the needs of modern industry. These needs vary from industry to industry. However, a few are tranportation facilities, availability of management, labor and clerical personnel, shopping facilities, and educational, cultural, and social facilities. The educational program of the local high school and junior highs determine whether an employer can recruit certain help locally or whether he must look elsewhere. In

any event, understanding and cooperation must come from many sources so that a favorable industrial climate can be attained.

Achieving the goals of this Community Renewal Program will substantially aid Woodbridge in attracting its share of regional industrial growth. As a more specific recommendation, it is suggested that the Keasbey area adjacent to the Raritan Arsenal land be developed and promoted as a planned industrial park offering a desirable physical environment for industrial plants. The plan should provide sites for a variety of industries and should be carefully integrated with the existing highway network. Especially important is the connection to Smith Street. This route furnishes direct access to U. S. Highway 9 and the Garden State Parkway. However, it must be remembered that the Parkway is limited to passenger vehicles.

As an added facility to serve an increasing number of modern plants, an air strip and/or heliport should be considered. An air strip would serve the air freight requirements of the industries as well as provide convenient transportation for the industrial personnel. With the development of a heliport, helicopter service might be started between Wood-Bridge and the New York and Newark Airports. Development of either facility should include hangar facilities and maintenance and repair facilities. The District Airport Engineer at New York International Airport would be available to consult on any such proposal.

The proposed location is considerably removed from intensive residential area, thus reducing problems often associated with such a development. Despite this, strict standards should be observed to insure adequate off-street parking and loading space and pleasant landscaped areas.

A committee should be formed to manage and promote development of the industrial park. Installation of roads, railroads, and utilities should be carefully phased so that completely serviced parcels are available during each phase of development. Township participation in construction of roads, utilities, and airstrip would act as an added inducement to industries.

Except for the airstrip, similar industrial parks might be developed in any of several additional locations in the Township. Possible individual sites should be examined with respect to the various problems involved, such as lack of highway or rail facilities, proximity to housing, topography, etc. Well-developed and properly operated industrial parks would play a major role in helping Woodbridge increase its industrial growth rate in years to come.

Although most of the vacant land is zoned for industry, much of this is low and swampy. To make this land more attractive to industry, Woodbridge should explore the costs of land reclamation. In Keasbey, for example, channels could be dredged along the river and the dredged material could be used as fill for raising the level of the adjoining land. Woodbridge is fortunate in having resources for a wide range of industrial development. It should take full advantage of these resources.

Attracting new industry will not be easy. Woodbridge faces competition from nearly all the surrounding communities not to mention cities large and small in all parts of the country. The "pirating" of industry by communities in other areas has been much publicized. Many groups have long been organized for the purpose of attracting industry, railroads, power companies, state development agencies, etc.

To be successful, the community must have a clear-cut objective. It must be unified in support of the Industrial Council and its program. A full time Director should be employed to head the Council. This person should be capable of meeting and working with industrial executives. He should understand the community, its resources, and the needs of industry. He should be a devoted and dynamic salesman. The Commission should prepare informational brochures advertising Woodbridge to prospective industries. It should keep readily available a file of data about the Township so that inquiries can be promptly answered. Facts about churches, schools, cultural facilities, community appearance, etc., often play an important part in the final decision regarding location of a plant.

5. Develop Parks and Recreation Land

To increase and broaden the recreational opportunities of the Township, a program should be instituted aimed at acquiring and developing additional parks, playgrounds, and recreation areas. Two financial assistance programs are available to Woodbridge to help in this work.

In the 1961 General Election, voters approved the Green Acres Acquisition Program. Under this program, State financial assistance is available to counties and municipalities for the acquisition of lands for permanent recreation and conservation uses. The program is administered by the Commissioner of Conservation and Economic Development.

In addition to the State program, a Federal program was approved in 1961, offering financial assistance to State and local public bodies to provide twenty to thirty percent of the cost of acquiring open land in and around urban areas. This program is administered locally by the Regional Director, Urban Renewal Administration, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Both programs base their participation on the actual price to be paid for the acquisition of the lands in question. The legislation of each program permits the participation of the other.

Woodbridge should develop a suitable part of its waterfront for recreational activities. Although most of the waterfront is devoted to in-

dustrial use, a tract of land south of the Sewaren Generating Station between Arthur Kill and Smith's Creek, presently vacant and in Township ownership, might be developed as a boat marina.

6. *Revitalize Neighborhood and Downtown Business Centers*

We recommend the retaining and strengthening of the major neighborhood centers of Avenel, Colonia, Iselin and Fords. Furthermore, in view of the strong competition from surrounding areas, we do not foresee the commercial functions of Woodbridge center to be significantly greater than those in the other neighborhoods. Assuming the civic and governmental functions are moved to a more centralized and convenient location within the Township, we suggest that Woodbridge center be retained as the commercial center for only the immediate area. In other words, Woodbridge center should be considered what it actually is, a neighborhood center rather than the Township center.

Each center should, over the years, be reshaped into a compact shopping area scaled to the needs of the neighborhood served. Stores should offer a variety of goods and services necessary to the convenience and daily shopping needs of the local residents. Plans should feature adequate off-street parking space and loading facilities, and pedestrian access to the stores should be directly from parking areas. Public facilities, on a limited scale, could be included, such as recreation facilities for children and young adults, medical clinic, fire station, post office, branch library, etc.

7. *Public Improvement Survey and Program*

The Township is making an inventory of all desirable public improvements. Maps will be prepared showing the condition of streets, sidewalks, curbs and gutters, sanitary sewers, storm sewers, etc. As Woodbridge continues to grow, expansion of various facilities can be anticipated. A new municipal building has already been mentioned as a needed improvement. Increased demands for water, sewage disposal, etc., may require expanded facilities. It is imperative that these various improvements be coordinated.

A hospital, now lacking in the Township, should be included in future plans along with the employment of a full-time health officer. These are just some of the facilities that should be considered.

Careful programming of public improvements is an essential part of any effort on the Township's part to come to grips with the problems of taxation and financing.

A capital improvements program is being prepared. This is an important first step; however, after the program is adopted, it must be continously reviewed and adjusted to reflect changed attitudes and conditions.

Although the three study areas of Fords, Hopelawn and Iselin are not severely affected with building deficiencies, the areas still deserve immediate attention so that the existing substandard conditions can be corrected. This should be done on a local basis through a well-planned program of rehabilitation activities. Enforcement of the housing code will play an important part in this campaign, however, the citizens in the various areas must be encouraged to renovate and improve their properties. This citizen participation is vital if neighborhood improvement and revitalization is to succeed.

The study areas of Avenel, Keasbey, Port Reading, Sewaren and Woodbridge Center are each designated as Federally-assisted projects. Most of the contemplated activities center on conservation and rehabilitation action rather than clearance, thus necessitating a minimum of relocation.

Most of the new homes built in Woodbridge fall in the $15,000 to $18,000 price range, with some going as low as $12,000. It is felt that even with the anticipated slowing down of home building in the coming years, a sufficient number of houses will be built to offset any problem of finding satisfactory housing for relocated families.

In addition to this, an increasing number of substandard dwellings will be renovated and brought up to standard condition during the next decade. This will add further to the total standard housing available in the Township.

Racial minority problems are often encountered in urban renewal relocation. This is not the case in Woodbridge as only about 650, or less than 1 percent, of the people residing in the Township are non-white. These are not concentrated in any area but are distributed throughout the Township. Adequate housing in standard condition should be available to all families dislocated by urban renewal.

Following is a review of each project area:

Avenel

Predominantly residential with a few commercial and industrial uses interspersed, primarily along St. George Avenue. Streets and sidewalks are non-existent or in generally poor condition. Storm drainage facilities are inadequate or non-existent.

The surrounding area is devoted primarily to residential development similar to that of the Project Area itself. Of importance here is the influence of three important highways in the vicinity. Avenel Street crosses the area and the more heavily-traveled St. George Avenue and U. S. Route 1 lie adjacent to it. The latter two, lined with highway business uses, form a commercial pocket within which residences are contained.

Deterioration: Of 43 substandard buildings, 13, or about 30%, are dilapidated. Five of these are contained within a single block, otherwise the substandard buildings are scattered within the Project Area. The substandard buildings are for the most part old dwellings. However, a number are commercial buildings, most of which lie along St. George Avenue.

Proposed Treatment: Much of this area appears to qualify as a Federally-assisted Project. Activities contemplated are Conservation-Rehabilitation of substandard buildings with limited spot clearance. Aim of this Project should be to demolish the poorest buildings, renovate those worth saving, and the reorganizing of retail business into a central location. Street, sidewalk, and sewer improvements are also anticipated.

Proposed Reuse of Any Cleared Land: Residential and commercial.

Estimated Project Cost: Gross—$550,000
Net —$510,000

Relocation: It is estimated that approximately 20 families, most of which live in dilapidated housing, and ten or fifteen small businesses would require relocation.

Keasbey

Development is limited primarily to residences concentrated generally in several parts of the Area. Much of the land is low-lying, and crossing the area are two raised approach highways to the Parkway Bridge and Edison Bridge across the Raritan River. Much of this Area falls in the shadow of the elevated twin roadways. Most of the remaining land is partially developed with industrial uses. One part (a now abandoned quarry pit) is being used privately for the open disposal of industrial waste. Streets, sidewalks, sewers, etc. are poorly designed, inadequate or completely lacking. Except for an old school building, a cemetery and a park, the Area is almost devoid of public facilities.

The adjacent area is largely undeveloped except for several major industries in the general vicinity of the river. A decade or two ago, clay and stone were extracted from the soil. Now all that remains are a number of large open excavations, some 30 to 40 feet in depth. Pools of stagnant water form in these low areas creating a health hazard by furnishing breeding places for mosquitoes and insects.

Deterioration: This Area has the highest level of deterioration. About 40 percent of the approximately 220 buildings are considered substandard. Most of these are forty years of age or older. Included in this total are about 20 single-family houses that originally were built and exist today as "company" housing.

The residential area to the east is in surprisingly good condition. Although about 25 buildings are substandard only one of these is dilapidated. This is probably due largely to four factors:

POTENTIAL PROJECT AREAS

CONSERVATION – REHABILITATION

CLEARANCE – CONSERVATION

A AVENEL

B KEASBEY

C PORT READING

D SEWAREN

E WOODBRIDGE CENTER

0 2000 4000 1 MILE 8000
SCALE IN FEET

NORTH

COMMUNITY RENEWAL PROGRAM

WOODBRIDGE, N.J.

WOODBRIDGE REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY

VICTOR GRUEN ASSOCIATES
ARCHITECTURE · ENGINEERING · PLANNING

1. Size of developed area is rather substantial (about 9 city blocks);
2. Area is almost completely built up;
3. Few buildings are over 35 or 40 years of age;
4. Development is limited almost entirely to one and two-family houses.

Proposed Treatment: Entire Area should be treated as a Federally-assisted predominantly Open Land Project with eastern residential area devoted to conservation-rehabilitation activities by upgrading of the property, and all remaining area to be designated for clearance with emphasis placed on the relocation of all families in the Area and the gradual elimination of residential uses.

Proposed Reuse of Any Cleared Land: Industrial.

Estimated Project Cost: Gross—$500,000
Net —$485,000

Relocation: Virtually, all of the non-industrial uses located in the western portion of the Project should be relocated. It is estimated that this would involve approximately 130 families living in 100 residential buildings. About six or eight small commercial uses and the existing elementary school would also be involved.

Port Reading

This area is predominantly residential with approximately twenty non-residential uses interspersed. These include several small industries, several commercial uses, and a number of mixed uses.

Although the physical shape of this Project Area is rather unusual, numerous important unifying factors are present. Historically one neighborhood, it contains one of the oldest public school buildings in the Township along with other public facilities such as a fire station, post office, library, parks and playgrounds, churches, etc. Civic organizations made up of local residents are actively working to upgrade the area. Streets are poorly designed and sidewalks, sewers, etc. are non-existent or inadequate.

To the north of the Project Area lies partially wooded land largely undeveloped except for the Turnpike. The adjacent area to the east is gradually being developed in residential use. The most recent is a 75-home subdivision known as Woodbridge Village. Partially developed industrial land adjoins the Project Area to the south, and to the west lies the Turnpike and scattered dwellings in neighboring Sewaren. Sewaren is, however, separated by a 300-foot wide Public Service right-of-way carrying high tension electric power lines.

Deterioration: Of the 52 substandard buildings within the Project Area, 20, or about 38 percent, are considered dilapidated. These, along with other substandard buildings, are fairly evenly distributed. Most are old residential structures, some of which are over 100 years old.

Proposed Treatment: Federally-assisted Conservation-Rehabilitation Project. Aim here is to rehabilitate Area through combined efforts of Federal Government, the Municipal Government, and local citizens. Dilapidated structures should be torn down. Owners of other substandard structures should be required to bring them up to reasonable conservation standards. The several small industries should be relocated and the few small commercial uses now scattered within the area should be relocated into a centralized retail center. The rehabilitated area should be buffered from the nearby industry by planting of trees and other dense shrubbery.

Proposed Reuse of Any Cleared Land: Residential and commercial.

Estimated Project Cost: Gross—$790,000
Net —$750,000

Relocation: Approximately 30 families along with about 8 businesses would have to be relocated.

Sewaren

This area is predominantly residential except for a half-dozen or so commercial uses. For the most part, these represent a mixture of newer buildings (five years of age or less) and large older buildings (fifty years of age or more). The main line of the Jersey Central Railroad crosses the eastern part of the Project Area.

Public facilities in the area and immediate vicinity include churches, public school, post office, a boat club, and a library. A civic improvement club is also active in the Area.

In close proximity to the east is the Public Service power generating station. To the south is situated a large, but partially developed industrial area. A sewage disposal plant and sparsely developed low, flat land border the Project Area on the west, and to the northwest are located some relatively new single-family homes.

Deterioration: Of the 42 substandard buildings, only 7, or less than 20 percent, are dilapidated. These are well distributed throughout the Area. The substandard buildings are almost exclusively residences.

Proposed Treatment: Federally-assisted Conservation-Rehabilitation Project. Treatment here would be similar to that in Port Reading. Every effort should be made to retain as many existing structures as possible.

Proposed Reuse of Cleared Land: Residential and commercial.

Estimated Project Cost: Gross—$520,000
Net —$485,000

Relocation: With a minimum of clearance, relocation should involve no more than 12 or 14 families and several businesses.

Woodbridge Center

The Turnpike divides it into two parts making it likely that this project would be carried out in two parts. The largest, or north part, includes much of the original central core of the Township, including Main Street with all its commercial activities, the Municipal Building, a municipal park, and a railroad passenger station. The remainder of the north part is devoted largely to dwellings interspersed with occasional business and small industrial uses. Streets are in generally poor condition; sidewalks, sewers, etc., are either inadequate or lacking.

Numerous residential facilities are present within the Project Area. These include several schools, parks and playgrounds, the Municipal Building, churches, social clubs, the Board of Education administrative offices, etc. Civic groups, comprised of downtown merchants and other citizens, are active in neighborhood improvement activities.

The north part is surrounded almost entirely by well-established and predominantly residential development. Several transportation routes are of primary importance, notably: the Pennsylvania Railroad, the New Jersey Turnpike, Green Street, Amboy Avenue, and Main Street.

The south part includes the Strawberry Hill section. Except for about a dozen commercial and industrial uses, this area is devoted almost entirely to residences.

Deterioration: Of the 115 substandard buildings, 25 are dilapidated. This represents a figure of just over 20 percent. However, a look at the building condition map shows that these tend to be concentrated along Main Street and the area just to the south and also along the railroad in the southern part.

Proposed Treatment: Federally-assisted Conservation-Rehabilitation Project with a limited amount of spot clearance.

Dilapidated buildings should be removed and others in substandard conditions should be brought up to conservation standards. Main Street should be treated in accordance with objectives discussed in Chapter VII.

Proposed Reuse of Any Cleared Land: Residential and Commercial.

Estimated Project Cost: Gross—$1,150,000
Net—$1,065,000

Relocation: It is estimated that 75 to 100 families would have to be relocated. In addition, some 20 to 30 small businesses and industries would be involved.

It is impossible at this time to determine exactly which buildings and people will be involved in relocation activities. Additional study is necessary before precise plans for each project can be drawn. In the meantime every effort will be made by the Township officials and agencies concerned with redevelopment to keep all people informed of proposed activities. The prime concern is for the Township and especially the adults and children in the various contemplated project areas. The ultimate conclusion of a project will be certain to increase property and neighborhood values; they can look forward to an improved living environment comprised of safe, decent, and sanitary housing.

Chapter IX – PROJECT PRIORITY

The scheduling of urban renewal projects can be approached from several directions. Financial considerations and economic factors suggest one direction while planning considerations alone suggest another.

Stated differently, those projects which promise the most overall benefit to a municipality are often the largest and most costly to undertake and therefore, the least likely to be attempted in view of these costs.

The first urban renewal project in Woodbridge has already been determined. The top priority assigned to the Port Reading Project ("Bowtie") was conditioned largely by the township decision to construct a new elementary school in the area.

The following table clearly shows the value of public improvements (in this case, a school) in reducing the cost of a project.

Table 16

Project Cost Estimates for Woodbridge

Name	*Gross Project Costs*	*Net Project Costs*	*Local Share (1/3 of Net Cost)*
Avenel	$ 550,000	$ 510,000	$170,000
Keasbey	500,000	485,000	162,000
Port Reading	790,000	750,000	None*
Sewaren	520,000	485,000	162,000
Woodbridge Center	1,150,000	1,065,000	355,000
			$849,000

* $250,000 in derivated non-cash credits from the construction of new school number 9.

The five major Federally-assisted Projects proposed for Woodbridge are included. The costs shown are very tentative. They have been derived so that we can better measure the scope of each project. As the planning for each project is undertaken, these costs can be determined in more detail and with greater accuracy.

The Marketability of Cleared Land: It is not possible at this time to forecast any significant demand for large tracts of land that might be cleared through urban renewal and made available for redevelopment. The land made available through renewal would not be in those portions of the Township where future demands are strongest.

The Projects as outlined call for major emphasis on conservation and rehabilitation. This being the case, a very limited amount of cleared land is anticipated.

Local Contribution in Urban Renewal: Because of the Township's severe fiscal strains, every effort will be made to minimize the Township's cash requirements in any urban renewal project. The local share of the project cost can be either in cash or in the form of non-cash credits for schools or other public facilities constructed in the area and of direct benefit to the project area. In Port Reading, a new elementary school has already been scheduled. Thus, the local share of the project costs of Project "Bowtie" is wholly from the non-cash credits for the school. No cash from the Township is required. To this end, the use of non-cash credits based on municipal programs already budgeted becomes important. Whenever possible, this will be the formula. By using this approach, urban renewal activities will not place further strains on the heavily loaded municipal financial structure.

From this discussion, it can be seen that the cost of a project to a community can dictate its scheduling. The project costs shown in Table 16 suggest the following order of priority:

Projects	*Type*	*Starting Date*
Port Reading	Conservation	1962
Avenel	Conservation	1963
Sewaren	Conservation	1964
Keasbey	Clearance-Conservation	1965
Woodbridge Center	Conservation	1966

While this may be the best arrangement in terms of the present Township financial picture, it does not reflect some important planning considerations. In terms of over-all township benefit, the projects in Woodbridge Center and Keasbey are the two most important. Early scheduling of these is desirable. Therefore, as early as possible, the Township should make some inquiries of the industries in Keasbey. If there can be definite assurance that existing local firms would be willing to purchase any cleared land made available at fair market reuse values or that new plants are interested in this land, this project should receive second priority. Assuming it takes 18 months each to complete the first two conservation projects, the Township has adequate time in which to study the situation and a decision can be made then regarding the next project.

There are many advantages to scheduling Woodbridge Center and Keasbey earlier than suggested above and if the Township can find the financial wherewithal to do so, it should proceed.

Chapter X – CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

People hold the key to successful urban renewal plans. Many well-planned and financially sound programs fail to get started simply because redevelopers and public officials do not take into account the motivations, needs, and aspirations of the people in the project areas.

Citizen understanding and support are essential to the acceptance and achievement of urban renewal objectives, to the enforcement of codes and ordinances, to providing the facilities for and the housing of displaced persons, and to the general planning of the community.

The neighborhood organization provides the best means for demonstrating to the citizen that he is not alone in his desire for better living conditions. He will see that his neighbors, his local government, and the Federal Government are all working with him toward the same goal and that something can be done about improving his neighborhood. As soon as it is shown that the situation is not hopeless, citizen interest is usually aroused. Involving people early in a well-conceived and planned program generally assures their willing participation throughout the planning and execution stages of the project.

Citizen support is especially important in Woodbridge inasmuch as nearly all of the proposed renewal activities center on conservation and rehabilitation. In a clearance project, the residents and businessmen have little choice. They are forced to relocate. Thus, citizen support from the project areas is not very likely. On the other hand, the sucess of conservation activities depend largely upon citizen support. The willingness of the local citizens to invest their own money in rehabilitating their own property is vital. Such a project cannot be fully successful without the full understanding and support of everyone involved.

The Woodbridge Redevelopment Agency has carried on an active program of public information. Press coverage is extensive with news items of the various activities appearing regularly in several newspapers. Members of the Agency appear before various groups such as the Businessmens Association, Kiwanis, Junior Chamber of Commerce, P.T.A.'s, etc., to discuss urban renewal.

The Agency works with civic groups, church groups, college students preparing reports on urban renewal, and businessmen throughout the Township. A contest concerning urban renewal was inaugurated in the high school with 1,700 students given the opportunity to participate. This prompted several classroom discussions on urban renewal. A color movie about our Community Renewal Program is now being prepared for showing to all adult and student groups.

The success of this phase of the program has been outstanding. A good example is Project "Bowtie", Woodbridge's first urban renewal project. Here, the elected representatives of the area were the first to be informed of contemplated action. Numerous meetings were held and the people were given a chance to voice their opinion. This has resulted in unanimous approval from all agencies and, what is more significant, total acceptance and enthusiastic support from the people in the Bowtie area.

The Citizens Redevelopment Committee is composed of members from throughout the Township. It serves as the liaison advisory committee between the Governing Body and the Woodbridge Redevelopment Agency.

The Woodbridge Redevelopment Agency looks forward to meeting many more individuals and groups. The civic associations already in existence in many parts of the Township can be very useful in promoting the objectives of this program. They will be called upon to help in this never ending task.

This program envisions projects of two types—those with Federal assistance and those without. Both types will demand understanding and cooperation. The citizens here will have to be convinced of the wisdom of upgrading their property. Well-organized groups can be especially effective in this work. The block group is generally acknowledged as the best basis organizational group with representatives from each block joining into neighborhood groups.

Some communities have successfully conducted contests among various neighborhood groups to see which could do most to improve its neighborhood. Similar contests have been carried out on a block basis.

These are just a few of the ways that can be tried. At all times, the individual must be encouraged to help himself.

Chapter XI – CODE AND ORDINANCE REVISION

Codes and ordinances will play an important part in achieving our Community goals. Woodbridge will show little progress if we renew only some parts while allowing others to continue on a downward path of decline. Half of the residential structures in Woodbridge have been built since 1950.

This means that today, the oldest is only twelve years old. As these relatively new buildings age and approach maturity, they will become increasingly difficult to maintain. This is especially true of frame dwellings, the kind that predominates in Woodbridge.

Housing Code

A major weapon in the campaign to keep pleasant well-maintained neighborhoods is the Housing Code. The State of New Jersey does not publish a model housing code. Therefore each community must establish its own standards. These are derived from numerous sources.

The Woodbridge Code can be improved. It should be reviewed and strengthened in accordance with available state model housing codes.

Building Code

While the B.O.C.A. Building Code is an adequate code, it is felt that the code published as a "model" by the State of New Jersey is more appropriate. One part, "Rules for the Construction of One and Two Family Dwellings" would cover most of the building activity in Woodbridge. The major advantage of this code is its conciseness.

Subdivision Ordinance

The subdivision ordinance should be reprinted in a more understandable form. In 1959, an entirely new ordinance to replace the original one should have been adopted. Since this was not done, it should be done now. Article VIII in the ordinance should be expanded to include design standards for streets, sidewalks, and other improvements. Provisions should be considered for requiring tot-lots in residential subdivisions and discouraging "gridiron" street patterns.

Zoning Ordinance

The zoning ordinance should be reviewed in light of the following comments:

The list of definitions at the beginning of the ordinance should be reviewed for consistency of terminology and thoroughness. Terms such as "Filling Station," "Gross Floor Area," and "Junk or Salvage Yard" should be reviewed for preciseness of meaning. Additional terms such as "Garden Apartments" and "Used Car Lot" should be defined.

In the schedule as presented, the final column should be headed *Minimum Habitable Floor Area per Dwelling Unit*, using the term as defined in the Definitions.

The permissive terminology in the ordinance implies that all uses not listed in the various residential zones are prohibited from them; however, if this is true, it should include the statement where applicable.

In the space requirements for two-family dwellings and garden apartments, "floor area" should be defined or a defined term used. On page 19, section 4-C "habitable floor area" is used. Most important, all terms should be consistent.

Residential: The tract or development house is well established in Woodbridge. The monotonous effect resulting from this repeated use of one or two basic designs presents Planning and Zoning experts with a most difficult problem. A few communities have combated this by devising a set of "no look alike" regulations. These require that adjoining or neighborhood houses differ in at least three out of six respects; for example, height of roof ridge, width of end walls, etc. To encourage a similar result and more imaginative design, a more positive approach is suggested. The intent here is to provide some flexibility of the rigid standards as stated by allowing certain yard and height requirements to be relaxed or waived provided certain conditions are met.

Probably the most common current technique used to achieve this is that sometimes referred to as density or cluster zoning. Briefly, this involves a set of rules whereby the minimum lot size, yard requirements, etc., can be reduced a certain percent provided that the subdivision as proposed will not result in a greater population density than if the property in question were developed at the original density. The basic requirement is that in turn for the privilege of using smaller lots and closer spacing, the developer must dedicate as permanent public or semi-public use the difference in land area of the two schemes. It is hoped that this will encourage a variety of building types and spacing resulting possibly in groups or clusters of dwelling structures separated by open park area.

To carry this a step further, it is not inconceiveable that certain non-residential uses generally considered incompatible in a residential area could be incorporated into the plan with favorable results.

The freedom allowed the developer within the framework of zoning depends, of course, on the local situation. A sophisticated system of formulas can be devised whereby design variations are possible but controlled. On the other hand, the decision for allowing a development to proceed can rest with the value judgement of the Planning Board, architectural review board or similar group. If qualified personnel are available, the Review Board is probably ideal; otherwise a list of flexible rules is probably the best solution.

To achieve a more varied appearance in smaller developments, an alternative is suggested. This might be to establish an average minimum setback of, say, 10 or 15 feet. A certain proportion of lots in a given area would be required to meet this minimum, however, some would be al-

lowed to fall under this figure provided an equal number are enough above to maintain the average specified.

The design review process now a part of the subdivision ordinance is meant to achieve variety. This provision should be reviewed for inclusion in the zoning ordinance rather than the subdivision ordinance.

"Front yard" is defined as an open, unoccupied space on the same lot . . . This reference to unoccupied space should be restated to allow such items as trees, landscaping, walls, outdoor living areas, etc. This added flexibility would be especially applicable to "walled in" town houses.

Although the ordinance allows multi-family structures of up to five stories and garden apartments, they are limited to the B-2 business district and R-6A residential district. It is likely that this limitation will encourage more monotonous development throughout the rest of the community. Through density control, controlled dwelling unit, multi-family structures could be allowed in other districts giving the Township more variety and the developers more flexibility in meeting market opportunities.

Commercial: The features of the three business districts seem well related to the different parts of the trade area. The exclusion of residences in these districts is highly desirable as there is often a tendency for residential development to pre-empt land immediately surrounding the initial commercial use, thus preventing normal commercial expansion of this area.

Wording of the off-street loading and unloading space provisions seems vague and unclear. B-1 requires one parking space for 200 square feet of sales area and zone B-3 requires one space per 100 square feet of gross floor area. Why the differences in standards and terminology? This should be clarified.

Industrial: Industrial uses are classified into three groups, a list of permitted uses, prohibited uses, and an implied list judged on performance requirements.

A more satisfactory technique would be to derive a list of permitted uses, prohibit all others and establish a compehensive list of criteria for judging the nuisance factors of those prohibited. By measuring each proposed industrial use against these "performance standards" certain ones would then be allowed.

The reference to truck loading and unloading areas to the commercial areas has not been clearly defined, and it is doubtful whether "sufficient" amount of space is going to be voluntarily provided.

Chapter XII – GOVERNMENTAL REORGANIZATION

Planning and urban renewal are closely allied functions of government. They must operate within the complex framework of a chief executive, governing body, legislative body, departments, agencies, etc. To make them function efficiently is a problem facing many municipalities today.

A new administration took office on January 1, 1962. Within a few days, changes in the governmental structure were announced. The organization as it stands at present is shown in Chapter IV. The most significant change is the addition of a Planning and Development Committee. Under this committee are grouped the five departments and agencies most immediately involved in land development.

Under Woodbridge's present Mayor-Council government, this appears to be a satisfactory arrangement. We suspect, however, that there are better ones.

The Woodbridge Redevelopment Agency has done a great deal to coordinate the various inspection functions. Common inspection forms have been devised and are now being used.

Woodbridge should consider the employment of one or two city planners on a regular basis. Although there is no set pattern regarding planning personnel, a quick review of cities in Woodbridge's population group indicates that a number of cities employ at least one planner and some employ as many as four. Such a person would be a valuable asset to the Township in many ways.

It is also suggested that a shade tree commission be formed. This commission should be responsible for encouraging the planting and preserving of shade trees.

In the current experiments in reorganization, the goal is better coordination of planning and renewal programs. The underlying technique generally used is a single agency—a newly created department or office directly under the chief executive. The aim is to pull together in one administrative division all the agencies dealing with zoning, subdivision, code enforcement, planning, redevelopment, etc., and arrange them in such a way that all of these functions can be properly carried out and coordinated.

These things should be kept in mind by the charter study group. It is likely that a new form of government will be recommended soon. Whichever form is recommended, close integration of the planning functions should be possible. Above all, a new form of government should feature a strong chief executive.

The local citizens should keep informed of any proposal because previous to the adoption of a new Government, it must be approved by the voters. If the proposal is defeated, it cannot be reconsidered for four years. On the other hand, if a proposed change is approved, the citizens cannot reconsider this decision for five years.

Chapter XIII – PLANNING REVIEW AND UPDATING

The completion of this study does not mean an end to the planning and urban renewal effort for Woodbridge. Instead, this work should be considered as a step forward. There should never be a "final" plan, but rather a continuing process of planning review and re-evaluation.

Local officials, businessmen, investors, technicians, planners, and indeed every citizen in the community can make some contribution towards shaping the future living pattern. New technical, legal, financing, and administrative techniques will continually evolve, and modification of the plans will often be necessary to reflect these changed conditions.

Woodbridge has many opportunities and much potential. How far it goes in fulfilling this potential depends on the willingness and enthusiasm of its citizens, businessmen, and public officials to accept and support the bold measures necessary.

The one constant is the desired goal: **A community which is pleasant, healthy, safe, and prosperous—and which will be a source of pride to all its citizens.**

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